

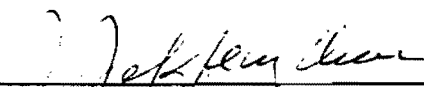
RENEWAL THROUGH RECOVERY OF THE APOSTOLIC
PROCLAMATION, PURPOSE, AND POWER:
THE INVENTION OF W. CARL
KETCHERSIDE

By

Stanley K. McDaniel

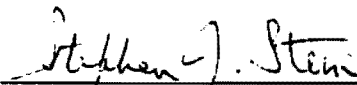
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We are in a cultural framework that has now already sponsored two great awakenings, and I'd like to tell you today, although I'm not a prophet or the son of a prophet, I believe we're going to see what history will some day refer to as the third great awakening. Now out of the second great awakening came the Restoration Movement of which we're a part. I'm hoping that a third restoration movement will come out of the third great awakening, and I'm hoping that it will restore the Restoration Movement, some of the ideals. We no longer can talk to a world that's looking for renewal about restoration. Half the members of our congregations don't even know they're a part of a restoration movement. As a matter of fact, they don't even know what they're a part of. But in any event, they come every Sunday and go through the ritual. What we need to do is to recapture, not a restoration movement, but we need to tie into the desire for renewal, and my theme is that renewal can only be accomplished through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power.

W. Carl Ketcherside, recorded 30, 31 March 1977,
Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville,
(cassette).

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Chapter I

Introduction

American Protestant churches, in exercising their freedom of expression, rely primarily on oral and written discourse. They maintain and enlarge their respective memberships, and they propagate their unique beliefs and practices, through the spoken and written word. These communication tasks require rhetorically talented leaders, and a minister whose sermons and essays excel in the art of persuasion will attract critical curiosity and inquiry, especially if that minister communicates a message considered heterodox by his own religious group.

William Carl Ketcherside of St. Louis epitomizes this type of minister. Since 1920 he has served within the fellowship of the Disciples of Christ, a group that originated on the nineteenth century American frontier, followed the westward migration, and rapidly multiplied in membership. Successfully advocating the unity of all Protestant believers through a restoration of biblical essentials, the Disciples became victims of their explosive growth, their ideological inconsistencies, and cultural changes. Consequently, they divided into three distinct bodies.¹ Ketcherside, while a youth, identified with the Churches of Christ, the conservative faction of this unity-restoration movement, and his ministry has been mainly to this group.

His office of ministry, however, differs from that of the located, salaried church pastor. He holds no official position, remains financially independent of any congregation or institutional system, and lacks a formal college or seminary education. His discourse counters many beliefs, practices, and attitudes characteristic of the conservative Disciples, and he repudiates loyalty to all religious parties within the spectrum of Christendom. Nevertheless, he enjoys a growing ecumenical influence among the Disciples of Christ and evangelical Protestantism. A Disciple minister identified Ketcherside as the person "who has created a growing irenic spirit among the three main divisions within the Restoration Movement."² A Bethany College president affirmed that "Carl Ketcherside has brought an irenic spirit to the entire Restoration Movement."³ An editor of Christian Standard, a journal of the Disciples, described the rhetoric of Ketcherside as "impressive, whether . . . in public address, or in writing. In every instance it is masterfully effective . . ."⁴ In 1965 Ketcherside addressed the assembly of the World Convention of the Churches of Christ, the only Disciple from the non-instrumental music faction to do so.⁵ He has attracted attention outside the Disciples, being invited to speak at Harvard University on "A Conservative Alternative to the Ecumenical Movement" and before the International Convention of Christian Endeavor.⁶

Conservative Disciples have reacted to the speaking and writing of Ketcherside by warning their readers of his influence. The editor of Firm Foundation conceded that Ketcherside presents "profound truths,"

. . . couched in some of the best writing of our generation," and he concluded, "This makes the insidious error these writings contain even more dangerous."⁷ Another writer claimed that "a new religious sect is being born," whose "chief spokesman is Bro. Carl Ketcherside," and poses "the greatest threat to the peace and unity of nearly two million Christians than anything that has faced us in many years."⁸ Truth Magazine, while vigorously attacking Ketcherside, claimed that he possesses a "gift for showmanship;" he is "all but irresistible;" he makes "effective use of slogans;" and he has "stolen the hearts of many of our finest young people."⁹ These facts and representative comments indicate that Ketcherside speaks and writes with exceptional skill and influence, making his oral and written discourse worthy of scholarly examination.

Two researchers have examined selected essays of Ketcherside, written by him between the late 1950's and early 1967. William Wilbanks compared Ketcherside with Thomas and Alexander Campbell, founders of the Restoration Movement. He identified the similarities and differences among them on the doctrine of fellowship, and reported that no significant disagreement existed.¹⁰ He concluded, however, that Ketcherside was moving from a conservative to a liberal view of fellowship, while the Campbells had moved in the opposite direction.¹¹ The research of Wilbanks excluded criticism of the rhetorical role of Ketcherside within the Movement and of his rhetorical invention.

Larry Stephens selected several topics and compared the opinions of Ketcherside and the founders of the Movement of each topic.¹² He

concluded that, in general, Ketcherside agreed with the early Disciples. Stephens did not evaluate the rhetorical invention or the role of Ketcherside among the Disciples. He did argue, however, that his influence created "a growing awareness and sense of cooperation between the various segments of the Movement," concluding that "the change of thinking which has taken place in the minds of many members is certainly a beginning of cooperative action toward reunion."¹³

Wilbanks and Stephens examined only selected doctrines in the writings of Ketcherside prior to early 1967. They did not examine his rhetorical function within the Movement; they examined none of his oral discourse; and they did not rhetorically judge his invention (ideas, concepts, arguments, and evidence). These areas remain for research. Accordingly, this study will investigate the role of Ketcherside in the Movement and evaluate his oral and written invention.

Is Ketcherside saying anything significantly different from the beliefs and practices of the conservative Disciples of Christ? This question requires an examination of his invention delivered at discrete points in time. What are the functions and consequences, if any, of his rhetorical work within the Restoration Movement? An examination of his invention in relation to the Movement extending through time will answer the latter question. Initial research suggested three theses as focal points in answering the above major questions. One thesis asserts that an accurate perception of the needs and expectations of the Disciples in their current stage of development partially accounts for the rhetorical influence of Ketcherside. A second thesis argues that

Ketcherside is revitalizing the Movement by increasing the internal organization and consistency of its dissonant and mutually contradictory doctrines and practices. Finally, a third thesis suggests several potential consequences from the influence of Ketcherside: the Disciples may adopt a new religious system; a new faction may separate from the Movement; or the Disciples may modify their contradictory doctrines and practices without dividing themselves.

This study recognizes that traditional rhetorical criticism examines discourse as a discrete art form, focusing on constituents intrinsic to discourse. Criticizing discourse, therefore, as it arises from the dynamics of facts, events, and relationships, requires adding to traditional criticism a nonrhetorical concept as an organizing feature of the critical process.¹⁴ For this reason, traditional criticism and a critical perspective adopted from sociological and anthropological studies of religious groups constitute the general features of the research design.¹⁵ An explication of these sources follows.

Since traditional criticism limits its subject matter almost entirely to persuasive discourse, the scope of this study, an analysis of the persuasive discourse of Carl Ketcherside, accepts this limitation.¹⁶ First, this study describes the primary audience to which Ketcherside communicated, the conservative Churches of Christ and Christian Churches, by reporting the post-Civil War divisions of the Restoration Movement. Second, in order to understand and to place Ketcherside in relation to the Movement as a communicator, this

investigation reports his biographical data germane to this research. An examination of selected writings and recorded discourses, produced by Ketcherside, constitutes the third task. This research discovers and describes the invention of Ketcherside as it relates to the beliefs and practices of the Disciples of Christ. Finally, using the research findings, this study determines the adequacy of the theses proposed concerning the function of the discourse of Ketcherside and its influence on the Restoration Movement.

Two limitations characterize the traditional perspective outlined above. Its analytical constructs and critical posture inadequately reveal the rhetorical motivation of the communicator in any specific act of discourse. Furthermore, the traditional focus on the immediate speechmaking occasion, audience, and effect, creates a critical impotence for discovering and evaluating the long term role of a communicator within a movement. This limited perspective encourages the rhetorical critic to avoid judging discourse delivered to a relatively universal audience, with a stable membership existing through time and space. Therefore, this study supplements traditional criticism with a perspective synthesized from research that examined the rise and development of religious groups.

This research indicated that diverse social movements bear strong similarities in origin and growth.¹⁷ Using the method of controlled comparison,¹⁸ researchers discovered that significant regularities in cultural change exist within independent social groups. The causes, leadership roles, and developmental patterns of the movements displayed

parallel forms and functions. Applied to the critical evaluation of discourse, this suggests that greater understanding will result by describing and evaluating the rhetoric of a social movement with our knowledge of these parallel characteristics. This posture recognizes that each religious movement is sui generis rather than the product of any assumed universal cultural laws. It affirms that within the diversity of groups there exist describable parallels in origin, leadership roles, and developmental patterns. These parallel forms and functions serve this study, not as cultural laws, but as a frame of reference for rhetorical criticism.

The research of Anthony Wallace provides a nonrhetorical concept as a frame of reference to facilitate the critical goals of this study. Working with data from hundreds of religious groups on five continents, Wallace discovered a genotypical form of group emergence, leadership role, and development. He called the form a revitalization movement, defined it as a deliberate, organized, conscious effort by members of a society to construct a more satisfying culture, and described such movements in several overlapping stages. A revitalization movement begins with a social system experiencing stress it can tolerate, because its traditional techniques and institutions effectively reduce tensions. If, over a number of years, the members of the society experience a decreasing effectiveness with the traditional modes of stress reduction, they begin to consider alternative ways of behavior. Increased dissatisfaction with the culture leads the society into the stage of cultural distortion, where a significant number of members

experiment with some or all of the following modes of behavior: regression to alcoholism, passivity, dependency relationships, violence, disregard of social mores, depression, self-reproach, and psychosomatic and neurotic disorders. The culture becomes internally distorted, lacking harmony among its elements, and displaying mutually contradictory characteristics. This emergent chaos sets the stage for the six tasks of the revitalization: (1) An individual formulates a new cultural system and becomes the leader of the movement. (2) The leader communicates the new culture to members of the society. (3) Converts organize as a set of disciples and a mass of followers. (4) The leader and the disciples adjust the new system due to its own minor inadequacies. (5) The innovators capture and use the media and institutions of public education and social control in order to transform the new system into operable programs. (6) The function of the movement shifts from innovation to maintenance for the routinization of its gains. The movement ends with a new social system resembling the former in some aspects but radically differing from it in other aspects.¹⁹

The revitalization movement construct can provide critical insights into rhetorical discourse concomitant to any stage of the process. The formulation and communication tasks of the revitalization stage provide focal points for this study. Formulating and communicating the new cultural system requires that the innovators employ the rhetorical arts. In fact, unless they resort to coercion, the success of the revitalization movement depends directly upon their mastery and skillful employment of rhetorical strategies and techniques.

The ministry of Ketcherside to the conservative Disciples resembles the revitalization process described by Wallace. The leadership function in formulating a new religious system, therefore, requires special comment within this study. Wallace discovered that almost always a single person rather than a group formulated the new system. He noted that religious revitalization movements originated in a brief, dramatic moment of insight experienced by an individual.²⁰ Wallace suggested that this creative experience occurs when the individual perceives his culture as insane. His mental image of society and the cultural patterns he has followed cease to provide a rational frame of reference for his life. The level of internal communication, consistency, and correspondence with reality, among the components of his mental image, becomes intolerably low. This chaos encourages a resynthesis of the components. The individual identifies and breaks up the contradictory and mutually inconsistent elements. He forges a new set of associative links, resulting in a new religious system.²¹ Following the resynthesis experience he communicates the new message to the disorganized society.

Because the revitalization process requires that an individual formulate a new code, a critical posture employing this concept must make at least the following assumption: the rhetorical discourse of an individual who revitalizes a religious system must, at some point in time, reveal a dramatic change in expressed doctrines, practices, and attitudes, and produce behavior modification among the members of that society. As previously noted, Wilbanks and Stephens recognized, respectively, the shift of Ketcherside toward a more liberal Christian

fellowship, and a consequent change of mind among many Disciples as a result of his influence. Furthermore, another researcher, in commenting on the factional use of personal names within the Restoration Movement, wrote, "'Sommerites' were the . . . group led originally by Daniel Sommer . . . now known in some areas as 'Ketcherside-ites'—although the mature Carl Ketcherside no longer fits easily into such a category."²² Also, he noted that rather than continue as a factional leader, Ketcherside had begun a "unity drive" interested in "a kind of assimilation," and that currently he strives, "to reach a much wider audience."²³ Therefore, the critical perspective of this study, which supplements traditional criticism, must identify the elements constituting a religious system. According to the revitalization concept, the resynthesis experience identifies, breaks up, and reorders the mutually contradictory elements of the old system. Sociological research helps identify these elements.

Sociologists describe social institutions in terms of categories of systems²⁴ that serve as analytical tools.²⁵ At least four categories constitute a social institution: concepts, usages, associations, and instruments. For clarity, this study employs respectively the more commonly used religious terms: doctrines, practices, organizations, and symbols. These categories facilitate the critical processes of this research in two important ways. They help analyze the current divided state of the Restoration Movement, and they provide a description of the religious situation to which Ketcherside directs his discourse. Each category, therefore, needs a more complete description.²⁶

Doctrinal items refer to the manner in which the Disciples conceptualize the field of religion; work out their evaluational system; rationalize their origin, development, and mission; and define their attitude toward and relationships with other religious and social institutions, and society in general. Practices include customs, ceremonials and other actions mutually expected by Disciples. Groups composing the institutional structure of the Disciples of Christ constitute the organizational category. These groups contain members and leaders occupying various positions and playing numerous roles, usually in terms of institutional offices. The symbolic category encompasses the physical property, financial status, religious terminology, clerical dress, and in general, all material and verbal media the Disciples use to communicate their message.

In summary, several categories of elements constitute a religious system, and the members of a given system depend upon these elements for the satisfaction of their religious needs and expectations. When the system fails to satisfy them over a period of time psychological stress increases. When the stress rises to threshold level, the need for a revitalization movement exists. Usually a single individual, in a dramatic experience, begins a resynthesis of the doctrines, practices, organizations, and symbols of the religious system. Purportedly, the reformulated religion has an internal organization and harmony that is superior to the former religion. Following the resynthesis, the leader preaches the new code, gains converts and, if the movement succeeds, ultimately supplants the old system.

The research design emerging from this perspective, for concomitant and supplementary use with the traditional rhetorical perspective, begins with an examination of the Restoration Movement, asking if its elements became internally inconsistent and mutually contradictory, thus inadequately satisfying the religious needs of its members. The second task requires an investigation and recording of the life of Ketcherside, establishing that he promoted factionalism, but subsequently became a revitalization leader after a traumatic experience of insight and attitudinal change toward the Movement and Christendom in general. Analysis of the rhetorical invention of Ketcherside follows, noting any dramatic shifts he made toward reformulating the religious system of, primarily, the conservative Disciples of Christ. Of major concern here is the discovery, description, and evaluation of how he perceives the problems of the Movement, what causes he identifies for those problems, and what solutions he formulates to remove those causes. Finally, each thesis suggested as a possible answer to the major questions of this study receives an evaluation in light of the research findings.

The primary sources for this study include all known extant issues of Mission Messenger, edited and published by Ketcherside, essays and debates written by Ketcherside and published in various journals, pamphlets, and books, and his tape recorded discourses delivered during the two decades prior to this study. Thus, with the research design established and several theses suggested as possible answers to the major questions, we will study the people and the social setting to which Ketcherside communicates.

Notes

¹ In this study the terms Restoration Movement and Disciples of Christ refer to all the churches in the three-fold division. To designate the specific factions of the Movement the name Christian Church, International Convention refers to the liberals; Christian Church, North American Christian Convention represents the moderates; and Churches of Christ denotes the conservatives who oppose instrumental music in worship meetings.

² Letter received from E. Richard Crabtree, 17 October 1973.

³ Letter received from Perry E. Gresham, 29 June 1973.

⁴ Letter received from Edwin V. Hayden, 29 June 1973.

⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Our Abiding Heritage," Mission Messenger, 27 (1965), 129-134.

⁶ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Messenger Service," Mission Messenger, 37 (1975), 95.

⁷ "Blind In One Eye," Editorial, Firm Foundation, 79 (1962), 210.

⁸ Glen L. Wallace, "Labor Pains of A New Sect," Firm Foundation, 79 (1962), 757.

⁹ James W. Adams, "A Man, A Mission, and A Message," Truth, 17 (1973), 390; "Unity in Diversity," Truth, 17 (1973), 459; "Fellowship Is Not Endorsement," 17 (1973), 471; "How Successful Is Ketchersidian Subversion?" (II), Truth, 17 (1973), 707.

¹⁰ William Lee Wilbanks, "The Contemporary Discussion Concerning Fellowship in Light of the Views of Thomas and Alexander Campbell," Thesis Abilene Christian College 1966, pp. 2, 3.

¹¹ Wilbanks, p. 96.

¹² Larry R. Stephens, "Unity of the Restoration Movement and W. Carl Ketcherside," Thesis Fort Hayes Kansas State College 1967, pp. 2, 78, 96.

¹³ Stephens, p. 96.

¹⁴ Robert Scott and Bernard Brock, ed., "The Experiential Perspective," Methods of Rhetorical Criticism, (New York: Harper and Row, 1972), p. 127.

- 15 Herbert A. Wichelns, "The Literary Criticism of Oratory," ed. Scott and Brock, pp. 27-119. Edwin Black, Rhetorical Criticism: A Study in Method, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1965), pp. 27-90.
- 16 Black, pp. 10-17; 27-35. Wichelns, p. 54. Lester Thonssen, A. Craig Baird, and Waldo W. Braden, Speech Criticism, (New York: The Ronald Press, 2nd ed., 1970), pp. 6, 18.
- 17 E. T. Clark, The Small Sects In America, (Nashville: Cokesbury Press, 1937). Clifford Paynton and Robert Blackey, Why Revolution?, (Cambridge, MA: Schenkmen Pub. Co., 1971). Joachin Wach, Types of Religious Experience Christian and non-Christian, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1951). J. Milton Yinger, Religion in the Struggle for Power, (Durham, NC: Duke University Press, 1946). Peter Berger, "The Sociological Study of Sectarianism," Social Research, 21 (1955), 467-485. James C. Davies, "Toward A Theory of Revolution," American Sociological Review, 27 (1962), 5-19. Harold Pfautz, "The Sociology of Secularization: Religious Groups," American Journal of Sociology, 61 (1955), 121-128. Bryan Wilson, "An Analysis of Sect Development," American Sociological Review, 24 (1959), 3-15.
- 18 Fred Eggan, "Social Anthropology and the Method of Controlled Comparison," American Anthropologist, 56 (1954), 743-763. Julian H. Steward, "Evolution and Process," in Anthropology Today, ed. A. L. Kroeber, (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1953), pp. 313-325.
- 19 Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Revitalization Movements," American Anthropologist, 58 (1956), 264-281.
- 20 Wallace, pp. 270, 271.
- 21 Anthony F. C. Wallace, "Mazeway Resynthesis: A Biocultural Theory of Religious Inspiration," New York Academy of Sciences Transactions, 18 (1956), 626-638; "Mazeway Disintegration: The Individual's Perception of Socio-Cultural Disorganization," Human Organization, 16, No. 2 (1957), 23-27.
- 22 Flavil R. Yeakly, Jr., "Rhetorical Strategies Analyzed by Social Movement Theory As Applied to Conflict Within the Restoration Movement," Thesis University of Houston 1972, p. 100 (*Italics mine*).
- 23 Yeakly, p. 123. (*Italics mine*).
- 24 Constantine Panunzio, Major Social Institutions, (New York: Macmillan Co., 1939), p. 27.
- 25 Earl D. C. Brewer, "Sect and Church in Methodism," Social Forces, 30 (1952), 400-408.
- 26 Brewer, p. 401.

Chapter II

The Disciples of Christ, A Fragmented Unity Movement

American churches faced both a crisis and a challenge as the eighteenth century ended and the nineteenth century began. The recent national preoccupation with the Revolutionary War, the constitutional disestablishment of the churches, the popularity of Deism and French "infidelity," the lust for land, the "barbarism" of frontier life, and the divisions of American denominationalism combined to reduce the religious interests and commitments of Americans, especially in the South and the West. Church leaders viewed these conditions with alarm, but accepted them as a challenge to win the West and the South. Convinced that they were "chosen people" in a chosen nation, and that the grace of God and the holiness of His people would effect the perfection of man on American soil, both clergy and laity began to work. Consequently, the former century ended and the latter began in an era of revival preaching to convert unbelievers, of voluntary societies to reform the moral and social ills of the nation, and of heightened interest in cooperation among the denominations.¹

The hope and opportunity America provided to build a better life and the freedom to experiment with new ideas attracted an increasing number of immigrants during the early nineteenth century, among whom was

Thomas Campbell (1763-1854), a Seceder Presbyterian minister from Ireland. He arrived in Philadelphia on May 13, 1807, and immediately he received an appointment from the Synod to minister in western Pennsylvania.

While still in Ireland, Campbell had displayed two characteristics that the American frontier of 1807 strengthened: his independence of mind and his consuming passion for Christian unity. His ministry, guided by these traits, failed to conform to the norms of Seceder Presbyterianism. Influenced by the independent churches in Ireland, and the essays of John Locke, and encouraged by the freedom of the new Republic, Campbell quickly challenged the rigid and narrow orthodoxy of his Synod.² The Synod convicted him of teaching that their confession of faith rested on human authority only, and subsequently he severed his relationship with the Synod in May, 1809.³

Campbell continued preaching among his sympathizers. In August they formed the Christian Association of Washington County in order to recommend measures that "would give rest to our brethren through all the churches: as would restore unity, peace and purity to the whole church of God."⁴ He wrote the Declaration and Address, expressing the principles and objectives of the Christian Association. Adopted on September 7, 1809, the document advocated a unity-restoration movement within the existing Protestant churches.

The Declaration and Address advocated four principles fundamental to the Christian Association: the right of private judgment, the sole authority of the Scriptures, the evil of sectarianism, and the basis

for Christian unity in exact conformity to the Bible.⁵ Amplifying these principles, Campbell formulated thirteen propositions for the attainment of the goals of the Christian Association.⁶

The Declaration and Address affirmed the nonecclesiastical nature of the Christian Association. Its members functioned as "voluntary advocates for Church reformation" rather than as a church. They agreed to meet biannually, to finance the reformatory program of "simple evangelical Christianity, free from all mixture of human opinions and inventions of men," and to "encourage the formation of similar associations." In addition to this program, the members continued in their chosen denominations. Never did Thomas Campbell and the Christian Association seek ecclesiastical separation. Consequently, in 1810 he applied for membership to the Presbyterian Synod of Pittsburgh, but the Synod rejected the application.

The Christian Association realized none of its goals, existed less than two years, and on May 4, 1811, the members voted to become the Brush Run Church, an independent congregation.⁷ The church chose Thomas Campbell as elder, elected four deacons and licensed Alexander (1788-1866), son of Thomas, to preach. They observed weekly communion and on June 12, 1812, both Campbells, their wives and three others submitted to baptism by immersion, believing the Bible authorized only adult immersion. This action gained the reformers sympathy from the Baptists but increased their estrangement from the Presbyterians. In 1813 the Redstone Baptist Association voted to grant membership to the Brush Run Church, a membership characterized by tension and lasting only seventeen years.

Success eluded the small band of reformers, even with the advantages of their Baptist affiliation. By 1820 their advocacy of the principles of the Declaration and Address had produced only six congregations with a total membership of two hundred.⁸ Guided and characterized by the conciliatory and magnanimous Thomas Campbell, the reform movement began an assimilation into the Baptist denomination. The reformers, however, increasingly sought direction from Alexander Campbell, whose leadership style differed from his irenic father. Alexander had a fiery temperament, and his polemic ability appealed to the rugged frontiersmen and saved the Movement from oblivion. In 1820 he debated "Christian baptism" with the Rev. John Walker, a Seceder Presbyterian minister. The debate and its subsequent publication lifted Campbell from obscurity to public notice in western Pennsylvania and the Western Reserve. In 1823 Campbell debated the Rev. W. L. McCalla, a Presbyterian minister from Kentucky. This encounter attracted the attention of the "Christians," independent reformers in Kentucky led by Barton W. Stone (1772-1844).

Publication of the Walker debate quickly enhanced the fortunes of the reform movement and inspired Alexander Campbell to publish a periodical, The Christian Baptist. From 1823 to 1830 this journal proclaimed the message of unity through the restoration of the "ancient order." The paper succeeded so well that one historian concluded, "The influence of the Christian Baptist from the first was remarkable. . . . A small people in the beginning had become a power to be reckoned with ever afterward."⁹

In 1827 a significant personality added his influence to the Movement. The Mahoning Baptist Association of the Western Reserve, to which the Campbells belonged and among whom they had sympathetic journal readers, called Walter Scott (1796-1861) as their evangelist. Scott had arrived in New York from Scotland in 1818, and had moved to Philadelphia in 1819. Although his father had earned little as a music teacher, he provided his son with a cultured home and a classical education at the University of Edinburgh. In Philadelphia, Scott taught in a school conducted by a Mr. George Forrester. Forrester also led a small independent church that desired to practice "primitive Christianity." Scott joined the church, received baptism by immersion, and began a serious study of the Bible. Scott and Alexander Campbell met in 1821 and a warm friendship developed between them. In 1826 Scott moved to Steubenville, Ohio, and began attending the annual meetings of the Mahoning Association.

The eloquence and analytical powers of Scott made him a perfect advocate of the reformation. What Campbell had taught as doctrine Scott translated into "advocacy."¹⁰ His rational and egalitarian message, avoiding the frenzy of the frontier revival¹¹ and the arbitrariness of unconditional election,¹² adequately answered the salvation question for his listeners.¹³ The gospel, as Scott preached it, followed a definite order: faith, repentance, baptism, remission of sins, Holy Spirit, and eternal life. This arrangement appealed favorably to many on the Western Reserve, and they called it the bright jewel of the "Ancient Gospel."¹⁴ A. S. Hayden reported that

"a new era for the gospel had dawned,"¹⁵ and for the Mahoning Association members he was correct. At their annual meeting in 1828 they reported that membership more than doubled in one year.¹⁶

Scott not only insured the numerical success of the Movement but he led the reformers to a final separation from the Baptists. By 1830 his restoration preaching had captured the allegiance of the Mahoning Association to the extent that it was voted to dissolve the Association in favor of congregational autonomy. This turned the reformation in a different direction, giving it a separate institutional status but also the problems of a loosely associated fellowship of independent congregations. The Movement became the "Disciples of Christ," one among many Protestant denominations.

Independence from the Baptists, the public debates of Campbell, and the impact of the Christian Baptist moved the Disciples into the religious consciousness and affection of the "Christians" whose reform movement in Kentucky resembled that of the Campbells and Scott. Representatives of both groups recognized that they held more in common than in disagreement, and on January 1, 1832, they merged into a confederation of autonomous congregations. Encouraged by this union and supported by several features of the American frontier,¹⁷ the Disciples became the sixth in size among the American denominations by 1850.¹⁸ They reached a membership of nearly 200,000 a decade later.¹⁹ Historians describe a phenomenal growth among the Disciples from 1830 to 1860, not only in numbers but in brotherhood periodicals, national conventions, and agencies to educate, publish, evangelize, and care for

the aged and orphans.²⁰ In summary, by the eve of the Civil War the reform movement spawned by the Christian Association had developed the essential elements of an established religious institution: a system of doctrines, practices, organizations and symbols.

Growth in three areas characterized the Disciples during the latter half of the nineteenth century.²¹ They rapidly added new members, numbering nearly one million by the 1906 census. Secondly, they expanded and perfected their newly-founded denominational institutions, working for a more comprehensive and effective religious system. Finally, their increased denominational consciousness forced them to recognize the diversity of their membership and the growing social and ideological clashes among them.

In 1909 the Disciples gathered in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, for the centennial celebration of the Declaration and Address. Their auspicious growth from some twenty persons associated with Thomas Campbell to one million filled them with hope for continued growth in numbers and vitality. Their enthusiasm, however, distorted their recognition of forces already at work among them, tearing the Movement in three different directions. By 1970 membership had grown to 6,000,000, but this marked a decline in growth rate from the pre-Civil War era, and this number no longer represented a united people.²² By the mid-twentieth century three distinct religious bodies, having almost no association among themselves, represented the unity-restoration movement launched by the Campbells. Fragmented into the International Assembly of the Christian Church (Disciples of Christ),

the North American Convention of Christian Churches, and the Churches of Christ, the Movement achieved neither unity nor restoration. It added to Christendom a religious fellowship consisting of loosely federated congregations, ranging in doctrine and practice from the extremes of sectarian exclusivism to ecumenical inclusivism.²³

The founding principles of the Restoration Movement harbored divisive components that severely strained the Disciples during the nineteenth century and eventually divided them. Apparently the founders of the Movement failed to recognize these factors or could not revise the principles of the Movement to eliminate their divisiveness. The success of Alexander Campbell in public debate and journalism, and Walter Scott in evangelism, and the rapid growth rate of the Disciples caused a myopia within the Movement throughout most of the nineteenth century. An enthusiastic naivete, expressed by an early Disciple historian, distorted their preceptions.

The ground principles of all this grand movement—that the Bible is a self-interpreting book; that it is not to be interpreted in the interests of any party, or any received system of theology; that a correct and faithful use of it would lead back the divided saints into the original apostolic "unity of the spirit in the bond of peace," a glorious consummation, and so bring about the long prayed for union of God's people—these views, so clear, so desirable, and so in harmony with the Holy Scriptures, were warmly cherished and much discussed.²⁴

In contrast, eighty-nine years later, another Disciple historian lamented, "It seems that the church lives in a perpetual crisis. No sooner has one issue been dealt with than another of equal seriousness arises to take its place."²⁵

The "perpetual crisis" situation arose, partially, from the mutually contradictory and inconsistent doctrines of the Disciples, a major factor leading to their divisions. Thomas Campbell expressed in the Declaration and Address, and the Disciples preached, the two-pronged concept of Christian unity by restoration of biblical essentials. The Disciples soon discovered that unity and restoration defied definition and achievement, and that each led in an opposite direction.²⁶ Thomas Campbell had emphasized, unity as the goal and restoration as the means. After the success of Walter Scott and the dissolution of the Mahoning Baptist Association, restorationism dominated those Disciples who assumed they had restored the biblical essentials.²⁷ Other Disciples continued to emphasize the unity of all believers, the original goal of Thomas Campbell. Many Disciples, therefore, polarized around unity or restoration, fragmenting themselves into their current divisions.²⁸

Another doctrine, biblical patternism, created further inconsistencies and contradictions. Restorationism demands a normative pattern to restore.²⁹ The Disciples taught, as a fundamental doctrine, that such a pattern existed.³⁰ Adopting biblical rationalism, the Disciples believed that all honest seekers could define from the Scriptures a simple Christianity with a definite body of doctrine and a program of worship, discipline, and government for the church.³¹ Despite the absolute necessity of spelling out the biblical pattern, the Disciples failed in this matter. Thomas Campbell promised a "Christian Catechism" to provide "that complete system of faith and duty expressly contained in the Sacred Oracles, respecting the doctrine,

worship, discipline and government of the church."³² He never wrote the promised catechism, nor did Alexander, the acknowledged leader of the Disciples, specify for divided Protestantism the blueprint for unity.³³ When DeGroot wrote his history of the thought of the Restoration Movement he entitled his book, Disciple Thought, avoiding the term "theology," because "there never was an official or accepted 'Disciple Theology.'"³⁴

Without an explicit pattern the Disciples disagreed among themselves as to its essential characteristics.³⁵ Some followed the legalistic ideas of Alexander Campbell while others preferred his more conciliatory and nonlegalistic writings.³⁶ Naturally, these contradictory viewpoints produced divergent images of the elusive pattern. Committed to patternism, the Disciples studied and preached the New Testament as a perfect constitution for the church; but their tenacity for congregationalism and individualism provided no restraints on any kind of interpretation and application of the New Testament.³⁷ In short, they created a potentially divisive system of doctrine.

The problem of patternism arose when the Disciples attempted a definitive discrimination between biblical essentials and biblical nonessentials. By predicating unity on the restoration of an entire, revealed religious system—the primitive church, its faith, discipline, worship, and government—the Disciples, on one hand, had to identify the essentials of that revealed system and demand their restoration. On the other hand, they had to identify the nonessentials and allow Christian liberty.³⁸ This issue put Campbell in a dilemma. The more

precisely he defined the essentials, the more he weakened the unity plea; but the more imprecisely he defined the essentials, the more he weakened the restoration plea.³⁹ Despite efforts to resolve the essentials-nonessentials controversy,⁴⁰ the Disciples failed.⁴¹

By 1865 a doctrinal breach existed in the movement. Conservative Disciples emphasized restorationism, legalistic patternism, and conformity to the "essentials," while liberal Disciples emphasized unity, the "spirit" of the gospel, and toleration for lists of divergent "essentials."⁴² These differences, plus the then current economic and sectional conflicts, fostered within the Movement the familiar sect to denomination evolution. Those Disciples less interested in restoring an explicit pattern interpreted their faith in denominational terms, while those Disciples who advocated the restoration of a fixed pattern interpreted their faith in sectarian terms.⁴³ Most Disciples identified with neither extreme sectarianism nor extreme denominationalism, but held to an inconsistent and contradictory combination of both. By 1900 these three divergent positions characterized the Disciples, encouraging their current divisions.⁴⁴

Finally, exclusivism, the teaching that God accepts your group alone, added another contradictory doctrine to the Movement.⁴⁵ While exclusivism existed in the thinking of some pre-Civil War Disciples, it took the war and several post-Civil War decades of North-South bickering to align personalities and periodicals for and against exclusivism. Some Disciples promoted unity through intercommunion with Christians in all religious groups, and they adopted an inclusivist

concept of Christian fellowship. Exclusivists denied that Christians existed in other religious groups, and fought for the dissolution of all denominations.⁴⁶ Exclusivism pitted Disciple against Disciple, demonstrating that their doctrinal system had become internally inconsistent.

As the Disciples entered the twentieth-century their doctrinal system became a major factor fragmenting the Movement. The divergent paths of unity and restoration, the disagreements over essentials and nonessentials that arose from patternism, and the incompatibility between exclusivism and inclusivism indicated that some of the doctrines of the Disciples had become inconsistent and mutually contradictory.

The practices of the Disciples, those patterns of action they regarded as essential to their welfare, contributed to the breakdown of their Movement.⁴⁷ Their practices became progressively inconsistent and contradictory, as did their doctrines. In fact, their practices became the cutting edge of division among them.⁴⁸ The Disciples held differing opinions on many issues, but as long as these issues involved personal belief only they were insignificant to the Movement. But when simple pro or con issues involved the corporate practices of their congregations, the religious system of the Disciples disintegrated.⁴⁹ "The irrepressible problem which placed an unbearable strain on the unity of the movement," one historian explained, "was the question of methodology."⁵⁰

A major inconsistency and contradiction in the practices of the Disciples focused on the question of the proper use of the Bible. Some used the Bible as a spiritual blueprint, observing not only its proclamations but also its silences.⁵¹ Other Disciples abhorred this attempt at biblical primitivism, and they used the Bible as a general guide, arguing that biblical silences allowed rather than condemned innovations.⁵² This controversy originated in the plea of Thomas Campbell to speak where the Scriptures speak and to be silent where they are silent.⁵³ The Movement fractured on this point, some applying legalistically the hermeneutic of biblical silence, and others applying the hermeneutic of "sanctified common sense."⁵⁴

The social practices of the Disciples who used the Bible as a fixed pattern of Christian faith differed from those of the Disciples who used the Bible as a general guide of Christian faith. The latter practiced accomodation toward the greater society, while the former practiced uncompromising opposition. "Sanctified common sense" adapted to the spirit of the current age and welcomed innovations as signs of progress,⁵⁵ while "being silent where the Bible is silent" opposed innovations as a capitulation to societal and religious decadence.⁵⁶ The accommodating Disciples became social activists, interested in curing the "popular sins of the age" and in functioning as a typical American denomination. The uncompromising Disciples became separatists, interested in "defending the faith" and in functioning as a typical American sect.⁵⁷ These diverse practices rapidly led the Disciples toward separate goals: some to social activism as denominationalists and some to social separatism as sectarians.⁵⁸

The practices of the Disciples toward other religious fellowships manifested inconsistency and contradiction. Accept or reject became their policy extremes toward other groups.⁵⁹ Despite the original emphasis on unity, there existed early in Disciple history an attitude and policy of vanquishment.⁶⁰ As seekers for truth, the Disciples accepted the "Christians in the sects;" but as defenders of "the restored truth," some Disciples doubted that Christians existed outside their own group.⁶¹ The Disciples divided into seekers and defenders, accepters and rejecters. The accepters joined with denominational groups to achieve unity through a consensus fidelium, even if they had to amend the restoration plea. The rejecters opposed union meetings with the denominations, insisting on their conversion to "the restored pattern," even if they distorted the unity plea.⁶²

Controversy over the proper observance of baptism grew out of the accept-or-reject policies toward other religious groups. The Disciples had to decide the course to take when a "pious unimmersed" or a "denominationally immersed" person decided to become a Disciple. Some Disciples, while practicing immersion, spiritualized baptism and practiced "open membership," the admission of the unimmersed into the fellowship of the Disciples.⁶³ Other Disciples followed a strict constructionist patternism and refused admission to all except the immersed.⁶⁴ A minority group carried their biblical primitivism to the extreme, practicing "rebaptism," the immersion of those immersed according to a formula with which they disagreed.⁶⁵ These contradictory practices shattered the fragile bonds of the Disciples, and they

divided into the legalistic right, the conservative center, and the liberal left.⁶⁶

The fragmentation process among the Disciples accelerated after the Civil War. Dissension raged over instrumental music in congregational worship, extra-congregational agencies to do church work, and the development of a professional clergy.⁶⁷ Prior to 1860 scattered reports told of the occasional use of a melodeon in church meetings, but that year the church in Midway, Kentucky, adopted the use of instrumental music.⁶⁸ Decades of agitation followed, in which the Gospel Advocate, published in Nashville, Tennessee, advocated drawing lines of fellowship against the innovators.⁶⁹ In 1892 Daniel Sommer (1850-1940), editor of the conservative Apostolic Review, urged that church deeds include a clause prohibiting instrumental music on the property.⁷⁰ The 1906 census officially recognized the division by listing the anti-instrumental "Churches of Christ" separately from the "Disciples of Christ."⁷¹

The development of a "clergy system" troubled the Disciples, but they divided less over this issue than they did over instrumental music. Ultra-conservative Disciples opposed the clergy system, and followed the leadership of the Apostolic Review, separating into "mutual ministry" churches.⁷² Most Disciples eventually adopted some form of a clergy, limiting the scope of the controversy and its divisiveness.⁷³

The practice of using extra-congregational agencies for the promotion of religious goals added to the disintegration of the Disciples. Early in the Movement Alexander Campbell sowed the seeds of opposition

toward "unauthorized societies to do the work of the churches."⁷⁴ Other leaders picked up the theme and it became a Disciple hallmark.⁷⁵ Fanatically supportive of local freedom, the Disciples adopted congregationalism and rejected all programs resembling episcopal or synodical control.⁷⁶ The dissolution of the Mahoning Baptist Association in 1830 killed any concerted action among the Disciples for years, and it caused some to interpret restoration as the razing of ecclesiastical organizations.⁷⁷ Campbell never adopted this extreme position, and by 1849, the founding year of the American Christian Missionary Society, he fully supported the principle of concerted, organized action.⁷⁸ The Disciples, however, emerged from the Civil War with mutually antagonistic opinions concerning the use of extra-congregational agencies. The conservatives refused to use agencies and rejected those who promoted them. The liberals proliferated agencies and ignored those who opposed them.⁷⁹ The Disciples polarized and isolated themselves into pro-agency and anti-agency parties, destroying their unity.

In summary, the Disciples disagreed over their practices, those religious patterns of action that they considered essential to their welfare. They differed on how to interpret biblical silences, how to respond to society in general, to other religious groups, and to the unimmersed believers seeking membership with them. They debated each other publicly on the use of instrumental music in Christian worship, the employment of professional clergymen, and the development of extra-congregational agencies to promote church work. Lack of a consensus on these practices destroyed the integrity of the Disciples as a religious institution.

The inconsistencies and contradictions in the doctrines and practices of the Disciples affected the organizational element of their religious system. Organizations are groups of persons united by common interests, formally arranged, having specific objectives, and held together by one primary bond essential to their existence and functioning. Organizations operate primarily in two areas, the promotive and the regulative.⁸⁰ They exist in order to employ visibly, to express correctly, and to perpetuate faithfully the doctrines and practices of a religious system.

The Disciples, a people who practiced congregationalism, never fully organized themselves; they united around "vague poles of emphasis."⁸¹ Lacking formal organization, they succumbed to internal problems throughout their history.⁸² Even congregationalism, however, needs clusters of fellowship as a means of conscious existence,⁸³ and editors began to meet that need.⁸⁴ Among the informally organized Disciples, the editors of periodicals promoted and regulated the Movement.⁸⁵ Consequently, the tri-doctrinal and tri-practical divisions of the Disciples resulted partially from editorial offices,⁸⁶ their ad hoc organizations.⁸⁷

Journalism influenced the Disciples decisively.⁸⁸ One historian suggested that the best way to trace the course of Disciple history is to study their editors and periodicals.⁸⁹ In 1908 a Disciple editor acknowledged the power of the pen within the fellowship when he wrote, "A divided journalism means, ultimately a divided brotherhood." The editors of the Disciples have been strong-minded, strong-willed men

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whose journalism provided the Disciples with the "machinery" for division where denominational structures did not exist.⁹¹

Division among the Disciples occurred at the congregational level when each group followed its local leadership, and when the local leadership followed the periodical to which it subscribed and read.⁹² By the first quarter of the twentieth century, the liberal Christian-Evangelist, the moderate Christian Standard, and the conservative Gospel Advocate represented most Disciples.⁹³

No fixed dates mark the divisions among the Disciples because divisive journalism gradually tears rather than abruptly breaking. By the final quarter of the nineteenth century, however, the lines of division existed,⁹⁴ and by the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century they had hardened. David Lipscomb (1831-1917), editor of the Gospel Advocate, represented the Disciples who emphasized restoration through patternism and conversion.⁹⁵ Centered mainly in the former Confederate States, they practiced closed membership, opposed accommodation to the greater society, instrumental music and extra-congregational agencies, observed biblical silences and developed an attitude of exclusivism. In short, the Advocate organized a group of sectarian Disciples. James H. Garrison (1842-1931), editor of the Christian-Evangelist, organized the Disciples who emphasized unity through consensus on the spirit of the gospel. They accommodated to the greater society, adopted innovations, developed extra-congregational agencies, tended to practice open membership, developed an inclusive attitude, and existed mainly in the former Northern States. In short,

the Christian-Evangelist organized a group of denominational Disciples. Issac Errett (1820-1888), editor of the Christian Standard, led the moderate Disciples. This group, a somewhat contradictory combination of sectarianism and denominationalism, existed as dissatisfied individuals within the single association of liberal and moderate Disciples until 1927. In 1927 they formed an identifiable organization, the North American Christian Convention, whose national leadership the Christian Standard provided.

The history of the Movement supports the statement, "The Disciples do not have bishops, they have editors." Clusters of Disciples formed around the editorial leadership that promoted and regulated the Movement. Given the growing diversity of their doctrines, their practices, and the sectional strains of the Civil War, the organizational divisions among the Disciples by editorial leadership were inevitable.⁹⁶

In addition to organization by journalism, the Disciples developed three types of annual gatherings, each representing the doctrines and practices of its sponsors. Early in the Movement, the Disciples in various states had met for discussion of mutual interests.⁹⁷ In 1849 the first national convention of Disciples convened in Cincinnati and organized the American Christian Missionary Society.⁹⁸ In 1917, this organization became the International Convention of Disciples of Christ and at their 1919 convention the Disciples consolidated several agencies into The United Christian Missionary Society.⁹⁹ By mid-twentieth century the moderates and the conservatives no longer participated in these annual conventions, and in 1956 the International Convention

moved closer to a complete denominational status under the name of The International Convention of Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ). The convention office planned the annual assembly, represented the denomination in ecumenical concerns, and published the annual Year Book.¹⁰⁰ Adoption of an institutionalized denominational status occurred at their 1968 convention. The liberal Disciples restructured themselves "into a new concept of what it meant to be the church."¹⁰¹ This accomplishment completed the sect to denomination evolution for the liberal Disciples. "No longer a movement of individuals, congregations and agencies working together in an annual convention, they were now to become church."¹⁰²

Moderate Disciples, due to disagreement and dissension over doctrines and practices, began withdrawing from the International Convention during the first quarter of the twentieth century. In 1926 they organized an ad hoc "Committee on Future Action," which planned and convened the first North American Christian Convention, meeting in Indianapolis in 1927.¹⁰³ This convention, neither delegative nor legislative, serves as "the major forum for fellowship at the national level" for those Disciples who refuse to become structurally a denomination or practice a radical sectarianism.¹⁰⁴

Conservative Disciples, located primarily in Southern states and practicing radical congregationalism, developed regional preaching lectureships as their system of brotherhood organization. They opposed national conventions and committees that could, in time, weaken congregational autonomy. Therefore, the colleges and university

supported by the conservative Disciples sponsor the lectureships. The leading and most representative lectureship of the Churches of Christ convenes annually at Abilene Christian University. For half a century this Bible lectureship "has filled a crucial vacuum by providing a medium for brotherhood-wide fellowship and stimulation." Recognizing the importance of the Abilene Lectureship to the institutional life of the Churches of Christ, William Banowsky, in his study of the lectureships, concluded, "If churches of Christ are saying anything, they are surely saying it at Abilene."¹⁰⁵ Founded in 1906 as Childer's Classical Institute, it became Abilene Christian University, an accredited four year liberal arts school. From its beginning the school served as a rallying center for the conservatives sponsoring preachers' meetings.¹⁰⁶ In 1918 the college expanded these meetings to a Bible lecture week and vigorously advertised it to the conservative Disciples. The lectureship pleased the large number who attended, and "the loosely-knit churches of Christ" found their "national forum to reflect and defend the distinguishing features of their faith."¹⁰⁷

In summary, the Disciples divided organizationally, institutionalizing the inconsistencies and contradictions of their doctrines and practices. Leading editors and periodicals guided the Disciples into separated groups. Each group, in turn, developed some type of extra-congregational fellowship to express and promote its respective doctrines and practices. Thus, a breakdown of the organizational element among the Disciples divided the Movement.

In addition to organizations that institutionalized their differences of doctrine and practice, the Disciples developed symbols that communicated those differences. The symbolic elements of a religious system include the material and verbal media used to teach its doctrines and to promote its practices. Although inadequate research exists concerning the symbolic elements of the Disciples, limited generalizations about their church buildings, church names, ministerial titles and specialized vocabulary are in order.

Early leadership among the Disciples reflected rural, economic values.¹⁰⁸ Consequently, during the first half of the nineteenth century economic necessity dictated that they construct modest church buildings. By 1865 this lower-class orientation began to disappear among prosperous, urban congregations.¹⁰⁹ Frontier simplicity disappeared as wealth increased, and a desire grew for more elaborate church buildings.¹¹⁰ This aspect of their symbol system developed according to economic and doctrinal differences within the Movement. The research of David E. Harrell Jr. reveals the symbolic disparity that developed between conservative and liberal Disciples in Tennessee. In 1916 Memphis had four conservative and four liberal congregations of Disciples. The former averaged 92 in membership, the latter 422. All four liberal congregations owned church buildings with an average value of \$35,000, while only two conservative congregations owned buildings, averaging \$2,250 in value. Their congregational budgets differed from \$6,000 for the liberals to \$942 for the conservatives. Harrell found that Memphis typified the entire state.¹¹¹ The co-existence of simple clapboard and

ornate gothic church buildings communicated more than architectural diversity. As symbols of a religious system they revealed the internal inconsistencies and mutual contradictions that existed among the Disciples.

The divided groups of the Disciples adopted various names for their church buildings in order to advertise their institutional image. The liberals adopted "First Christian Church (Disciples of Christ)." The moderates used both "Christian Church" and "Church of Christ." Occasionally a congregation added "Independent" or "Instrumental" on the church signboard to indicate their exact position on specific issues. The conservative Disciples, those opposed to instrumental music and extra-congregational agencies, used exclusively "Church of Christ." These names notify the public, the traveler looking for a specific fellowship, and the groups themselves that in the judgment of each party, justifiable divisions exist. These names also symbolize the demise of the integrity of the Movement.

Clerical and honorary titles, as used within the Movement, indicate its divided state. Early Disciples opposed honorary and ecclesiastical titles for religious leaders,¹¹² and they adopted "Elder" for the man who preached and "Brother" for the nonpreaching man. Currently, the Churches of Christ call their preachers "evangelists." The independent Christian Churches prefer "minister" or "pastor" to designate their preachers. Among the Christian Churches (Disciples of Christ), "pastor" and "minister" identify the preacher, and they use frequently the honorary titles of "Doctor" and "Reverend." These terms

serve an insulative function among the Disciples. Conservative Disciples use only clerical terms expressed in the Scriptures and avoid persons adopting nonbiblical titles. On the other hand, liberal Disciples avoid clerical terms which connote sectarianism. Thus, the language symbolizing the clerical office reveals the divisions among the Disciples.

Other vocabulary terms and phrases indicate the disintegration of the Movement. The use of "we-they" language, labels, and slogans insulated groups from each other rather than communicated meaning.¹¹³ One researcher suggested that these symbolic elements allowed the Disciples "to identify the insiders and the outsiders and at least indirectly help to keep the outsider out and the insider in."¹¹⁴ A limited survey of the journals representing the major divisions of the Disciples revealed a disparity among these journals in the use of specialized vocabulary. The Christian, representing the liberals, reported about the "executive secretary," "General Assembly," "executive minister," "general minister," "chief executive" and "state secretary" when referring to denominational positions and functions. The Christian Standard, representing the moderates, spoke of the "minister," "associate minister" and "missionary" to denote congregational offices and functions. The Gospel Advocate, representing the conservatives referred to the congregational "preacher" and "evangelist." The Christian used institutional names that communicated little to readers of the other two journals. The Standard readers learned about "faith promise rallies," a concept foreign to the other two. Advocate

subscribers received news of the latest "college lectureship," "singing workshop," "new work," "hobby" and "restorations"—terms absent from the other two journals. The Christian advertised "inter-faith meetings," "Week of Prayer" and "ecumenical services"; the Standard, "rallies," "clinics," and "revival meetings"; the Advocate, "debates" and "gospel meetings." The Christian advertised and pictured robes for ministers; the Standard, robes for choirs; the Advocate, robes unmentioned. The Christian printed the "International Uniform Sunday School Lesson"; the Standard invited various preachers from the independent Christian Churches to write the weekly "Bible School Lesson"; the Advocate provided a weekly "Bible Lesson." Of the three, only the Christian offers for sale a brotherhood symbol, a chalice with an engraved cross.¹¹⁵

By adopting one of these specialized vocabularies these three journals guaranteed estrangement among their respective readers. The language insulates and isolates, reinforcing and maintaining divisions among the Disciples.

In summary, by 1865 the religious symbols of the Disciples revealed that their Movement had divided three ways. Wide disparity existed in church building investment and design. They adopted divergent names and titles for their respective congregations and leaders. Their journals employed "we-they" language, labels, slogans, and journalistic phrases that widened the three-way rift.

The Disciples of Christ exist today as a fragmented unity-restoration movement. Achieving neither unity nor restoration, they developed internal inconsistencies and mutual contradictions within the

basic elements of their religious institution: their doctrines, practices, organizations, and symbols. As a result, the Disciples divided into three major groups, with small splinter groups forming periodically. Into this situation W. Carl Ketcherside entered, preaching a message and performing a role of revitalization.

Notes

¹ Winfred Garrison and Alfred DeGroot, The Disciples of Christ: A History (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1948), pp. 59-78. Winthrop S. Hudson, American Protestantism (Chicago: The University of Chicago Press, 1961), 49-127. Franklin H. Littell, From State Church to Pluralism (Chicago: Aldine Pub. Co., 1962), pp. 29-62. Bernard A. Weisberger, They Gathered At The River (Boston: Little, Brown and Co., 1958), pp. 20-50. Perry Miller, "From the Covenant to the Revival," in The Shaping of American Religion, Volume I, ed. James W. Smith and A. Leland Jamison (Princeton, New Jersey: Princeton University Press, 1961), pp. 322-368. George C. Bedell, Leo Sandon Jr. and Charles J. Wellborn, Religion In America (New York: Macmillan Pub. Co., 1975), pp. 154-163. John B. Boles, The Great Revival: 1787-1805, Lexington, Kentucky: The University Press of Kentucky, 1972), pp. 1-89.

² Garrison and DeGroot, pp. 127, 192.

³ William Tucker and Lester McAllister, Journey in Faith (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1975), p. 109.

⁴ Thomas Campbell, Declaration and Address (1809; rpt. St. Louis: Mission Messenger, 1972), p. 24.

⁵ Tucker and McAllister, p. 112.

⁶ Tucker and McAllister, p. 113. Summarized the propositions are: the essential unity of the church, the supreme authority of the Scriptures, the special authority of the New Testament, the fallacy of human creeds, the essential brotherhood of all who love Christ and try to follow him, the removal of all human innovations from the church to unite the followers of Christ upon the scriptural platform.

⁷ Garrison and DeGroot, p. 153.

⁸ Alexander Campbell, Memoirs of Elder Thomas Campbell (Cincinnati: H. S. Bosworth, 1861), p. 131.

⁹ M. M. Davis, The Restoration Movement of the Nineteenth Century (Cincinnati: The Standard Publishing Co., 1913), p. 124.

¹⁰ A. S. Hayden, A History of the Disciples on the Western Reserve (Cincinnati: Chase and Hall Publishers, 1975), p. 79.

¹¹ Garrison and DeGroot, p. 189.

- 12 Hayden, p. 103.
- 13 Tucker and McAllister, p. 131.
- 14 Hayden, p. 87.
- 15 Hayden, p. 71.
- 16 Garrison and DeGroot, p. 188.
- 17 Tucker and McAllister, pp. 181, 182.
- 18 David E. Harrell, Jr., Quest For A Christian America (Nashville: The Disciples of Christ Historical Society, 1966), p. 3.
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- 20 James DeForest Murch, Christians Only (Cincinnati: Standard Publishing Company, 1962), pp. 123-150. Tucker and McAllister, pp. 159-188. Garrison and DeGroot, pp. 201-330. Earl I. West, The Search For The Ancient Order (Nashville: Gospel Advocate Company, 1965), I, 127-180.
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- 22 Harrell, Social Sources of Division, pp. ix, 5.
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- 26 Alfred T. DeGroot, Disciple Thought: A History (Fort Worth, Texas: Author, 1965), p. 4. Alfred T. DeGroot, The Restoration Principle (St. Louis: The Bethany Press, 1960), p. 153.
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- 30 Declaration and Address, p. 45. M. M. Davis, p. 66.
- 31 Garrison and DeGroot, pp. 149, 150. Tucker and McAllister, p. 112. Harrell, Quest, p. 27.
- 32 DeGroot, The Restoration Principle, p. 138.
- 33 DeGroot, The Restoration Principle, p. 141.
- 34 DeGroot, Disciple Thought, p. 209.
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- 37 M. M. Davis, p. 276.
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- 42 Harrell, Quest, pp. 33, 34, 58, 59.
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- 48 DeGroot, Disciple Thought, pp. 5, 6. Winfred E. Garrison as quoted in William E. Tucker, p. 187.
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- 53 Harrell, Quest, p. 10.
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Chapter III

W. Carl Ketcherside and the Disciples of Christ

In 1920 Jesse Jackson, an elder of the Old Pearl, Illinois, Church of Christ, baptized twelve year old W. Carl Ketcherside in the creek flowing through the pasture of a Mr. John Willard. By this act Ketcherside joined a congregation that represented the sectarian tradition of the Disciples of Christ. These Disciples emphasized restorationism through conformity to a rigid pattern and they excluded nonconformists. Observing biblical silences, they opposed instrumental music in worship meetings, extra-congregational agencies, and a professional clergy. A rural folk of humble means and limited education, they practiced separation from the greater society and worked to convert other religious groups, refusing any cooperative corporate action with them.

Two Disciple patriarchs dominated the spiritual legacy inherited by Ketcherside, Benjamin Franklin (1812-1878) and Daniel Sommer (1850-1940). Born in Belmont County, Ohio, Franklin joined the Disciples in December, 1834, through the preaching of Samuel Rogers and Elijah Martindale. He contributed strong editorial leadership to the Disciples, second only to Alexander Campbell according to some.¹ Through The American Christian Review, which he edited to his death, he espoused

the conservative outlook among the Disciples in the Midwest. He opposed instrumental music in worship,² and after supporting the American Christian Missionary Society he turned against such agencies when, in 1862 and 1863, the Society passed war resolutions sympathetic to the North.³ Franklin viewed this action as a usurpation of congregational power.

Influential Northern Disciples disliked the neutrality of Franklin and the Review. In order to express Northern sentiment among the Disciples, they established the Christian Standard in 1866. Franklin bitterly opposed the Standard and its editor, Issac Erret, but after the Civil War the Standard supplanted the Review as the most popular journal in the North, and the Gospel Advocate captured the allegiance of the conservative Disciples in the South. The Review was popular mainly in the Midwest, and upon the death of Franklin that popularity waned rapidly.⁴ John Rowe edited the Review until 1886. Then W. B. F. Treat edited the journal briefly, just prior to its purchase in December, 1886, by Daniel Sommer.⁵

Born in St. Mary's County, Maryland, Sommer was baptized in 1869 during a preaching meeting held by Elder A. T. Crenshaw of Middletown, Pennsylvania.⁶ That year Sommer decided to preach the gospel, and he entered Bethany College in West Virginia, the college established by Alexander Campbell in 1840.⁷ At Bethany he demonstrated that he possessed a conservative and courageous mind.⁸ After three years at Bethany, Sommer began preaching full time, and he gained the favorable attention of Franklin. Like Franklin, Sommer lived a life of frontier

simplicity and financial humility.⁹ The aged Franklin wrote to Sommer just months before his death, and he hinted that if Sommer prepared himself he could assume editorship of the Review when Franklin died.¹⁰ The editorship, however, did not come until 1886 when Sommer purchased the Review.

Editorially, Sommer led as "a dominant protagonist of the right wing among the Disciples, and was usually regarded as the very tip of the wing."¹¹ Sommer was the principal speaker on August 18, 1889, at Sand Creek, Illinois, when the churches of Shelby County presented the "Address and Declaration," the first formal, public call for overt division between conservative and liberal Disciples.¹² In 1892 Sommer reprinted the Sand Creek "Declaration," and he urged the insertion of a clause in church property deeds prohibiting "innovations."¹³ Like Franklin, he championed the ideal of the rugged yeoman, worshipping God in simplicity of heart and mind. To Sommer, this ruled out costly church buildings, trained choirs, instrumental music, extra-congregational agencies, and a professional clergy. With this outlook, he molded the thought of the midwestern Disciples who read the Review.¹⁴

More than any other person, the Disciples identified Daniel Sommer with opposition toward Bible colleges. His public debates and written polemics against these institutions gave his followers a "distinct and unvarying polemic vocabulary."¹⁵ Among conservative Disciples, "Sommerism" became synonymous to an anti-Bible college position. Mainly he objected to the amount of the "Lord's money" invested in Bible colleges and the growing control over the local congregations exercised

by the colleges. Beginning in 1902, he published a series of articles attacking the growing acceptance of Bible colleges among the Churches of Christ.¹⁶ Consequently, Sommer progressively narrowed his associations among the Disciples. At Sand Creek he drove the wedge between himself and the "old digressives," Disciples who adopted instrumental music and the missionary society. He labelled advocates of Bible colleges and similar institutions as the "new digressives," and he alienated most of the conservative Disciples in the South.¹⁷ By the end of the first quarter of the twentieth century, Sommer spoke and wrote for a group of Disciples alienated from those represented by the three main periodicals of the Movement. "Sommerites" were anti-instrumental music, anti-professional clergy, and anti-Bible college; almost a separate Restoration Movement within the Disciples of Christ.¹⁸

This sectarian tradition dominated the religious life of Ketcherside from the age of five. His uncle, L. E. Ketcherside, a "Campbellite" preacher, converted the father of Ketcherside, W. Carl Ketcherside, Sr.¹⁹ Together the two men established a Church of Christ in their small mining town of Cantwell, Missouri.²⁰ From its inception, this church followed the editorial leadership of Daniel Sommer. Sommer conducted the first preaching meeting at the Cantwell church, at which time they learned about the dangerous "new digressives" who were "aping the sects" by creating a salaried ministry.²¹ The second visiting evangelist was D. Austen Sommer, son of the aged Daniel. The Review dominated religious thought in the Ketcherside home, taking second place only to the Bible.²² When the Ketchersides moved from Cantwell in

1916, because his father could no longer endure the dust in the lead mines, the Review directed them to the "loyal church" in Marshalltown, Iowa, where they made their new home.²³ After brief residences in Chillicothe and Gilman, Missouri, they moved to Pearl, Illinois, in 1920, and they identified with the Old Pearl Church of Christ. Several Churches of Christ met in the area, and many members knew no other type of Disciple church existed. They had no hired preacher, and they followed the advice of Benjamin Franklin: "teach the whole truth to the whole church and those with leadership ability will rise to the top as cream rises on the milk."²⁴

Shortly after his baptism young Carl found himself called upon to preach a sermon. J. C. Bunn, a visiting evangelist with the Old Pearl Church, announced on a Sunday evening that one month from that night Carl Ketcherside would preach the Sunday evening sermon. Unable to escape the situation, Ketcherside prepared and preached on the theme, "Counting the Cost." His sermon delighted the audience and immediately he had preaching invitations for every Sunday. By the age of thirteen he began traveling by railroad to conduct preaching meetings.²⁵ Even at the age of twelve, preparation rather than chance accounted greatly for his success as a speaker. From childhood, words fascinated him.²⁶ When Mr. Ketcherside became a Christian he decided to teach five year old Carl to read, and the boy learned eagerly and rapidly.²⁷ When Ketcherside entered the first grade he advanced to the second after two weeks, the third by Christmas, and he was in the fourth at the end of the school year. During this year he discovered the county traveling

library that came to the schools. He checked out four books weekly, the maximum allowed. Ketcherside claims that in four days he read each book twice, and then eagerly awaited the next arrival of the library. Because his mother and most of Cantwell were illiterate, he did the buying for his family and neighbors at the company store. In the evenings he read to a blind couple, and citizens of Cantwell would gather in the yard to hear young Carl read until darkness fell. In the latter part of 1916, the family moved to Marshalltown, Iowa, and a Carnegie Library became available to him. According to Ketcherside, he launched into a reading program that consumed one book daily for seven years.²⁸ In school his teachers recognized that he was better read than they on some topics, and frequently they allowed him to do the teaching. This delighted him, and he developed a taste for "expounding to a group." Therefore, he had some preparation when compelled to preach at the age of twelve.

During his high school years the Ketcherside family moved to Topeka, Kansas. At Topeka High School he studied speech under Miss Carmin Wolfe. Prior to this instruction his speech education had been imitation of models and reading speeches, especially those of William Jennings Bryan. Under the tutelage of Miss Wolfe he entered the national oratorical contest and spoke on "Benjamin Franklin and His Relationship to the Constitution." He went all the way to the nationals where he lost the next to last contest. The experience with Miss Wolfe made a significant mark on his subsequent career. He testified,

I had got the taste of speaking to an audience and the taste of oratory, and by that time I had learned what it meant to communicate to people on their level, not

just to get up and talk but to communicate. If this woman never taught me anything else she taught me that there was an art of communication and she imbued me with it.²⁹

After graduation in 1926, Ketcherside studied briefly at Topeka Business College on a scholarship. Due to his excellent penmanship he obtained a job with the Columbian Title and Trust Company, which at that time recorded its transactions by hand. During this employment he preached every weekend, and finally he resigned from the company to preach full time among the Churches of Christ. While conducting a meeting at Flat River, Missouri, he met Nell Watts whom he married on June 24, 1928, after one year of courtship. The Ketchersides made their residence at Nevada, Missouri, the birthplace of their two children.

Calls for his speaking services increased and came from diverse sources. His preaching schedule was booked solidly, preaching and teaching in church and school buildings throughout the Midwest. The men working for the Missouri Pacific Railroad in his area elected him their chaplain, and he became a safety lecturer for the railroad. Although not a member of any service club, he delivered many of their local convention speeches. In addition to his speaking responsibilities he pursued a constant program of research to provide himself with speaking materials.

On July 4, 1937, the Ketcherside family moved to St. Louis, Missouri. Ketcherside wanted his children to have the best educational opportunities possible. In St. Louis he taught an annual study of the

entire Bible. Students came from a wide area of the United States, stayed in private homes, and studied under Ketcherside from Monday through Friday, all day long and two hours nightly. He conducted this program for over ten years in local churches.³⁰

During the 1930's Ketcherside experienced a major division in his narrow segment of the Movement. Since his earliest association with the Disciples, Daniel Sommer and the Review supplied him with the "appropriate" elements of his religious system. Ketcherside, accordingly, rejected the legitimacy of the greater religious community of Protestants and Catholics. He refused association with those Disciples who used instrumental music and who supported the United Christian Missionary Society. He even opposed the anti-instrumental music Churches of Christ that supported institutions like David Lipscomb College and Abilene Christian University. In short, Ketcherside represented a Protestant expression of sectarian Christianity within the cultural context of rural America.

Some time prior to his twenty-fifth birthday a special relationship had developed between Ketcherside and Daniel Sommer. In his first public debate, March 23-26, 1937, Ketcherside referred to this relationship.

Brother Sommer has oftentimes remarked how he was the oldest and I was the youngest preacher in the brotherhood. He stood with his arm about my shoulder and mentioned the fact lovingly when he was last in my humble home. I have a letter in my briefcase which he wrote to me and wherein he said that he wanted me to prepare to take his place when he had crossed the dusky river. I think he said that he was about my age when Benjamin Franklin said the same to him.³¹

Despite this intimacy, Ketcherside reacted negatively toward Sommer when the latter became involved in efforts to restore unity among "the fragmented 'Restoration Movement'—unity which had been lost during Sommer's young manhood, and to which loss he was a visible contributor."³² Dr. Kershner, Dean of Butler University's College of Religion, invited Sommer to participate in the Butler Midsummer Institute, where speakers from diverse backgrounds contributed to the program. Sommer accepted the invitation in 1930, and his biographer concluded that Kershner's "irenic ecumenicity" had moved Sommer toward a greater openness toward those from whom he had separated. Indicative of this change, Sommer wrote Kershner after the 1930 Institute, "I am in correspondence with the Standard's editor concerning the oneness of the disciple brotherhood."³³

Negative reaction to this growing irenicism exploded when the June 21, 1932, issue of the Review published the article, "Can't We Agree On Something?" The authors purported to identify those things upon which the Churches of Christ could agree and work together.³⁴ The article, written by Chester and Allen Sommer, became known as the "Rough Draft."³⁵

Opposition to the "Rough Draft" reached near hysteria among some.³⁶ As a defensive reaction, several men called a general meeting of the leaders of the Churches of Christ (anti-Bible college and anti-professional clergy). They assembled in Kansas City, Missouri, December, 1933. Allen Sommer, son of Daniel, spoke in support of the "Rough Draft." According to Allen Sommer, the convention delegates

(self-appointed) decided to draw a line of fellowship against supporters of the "Rough Draft" and to rally around the Macedonian Call, edited by D. Austen Sommer, the oldest son of Daniel Sommer.³⁷ The antagonists of the "Rough Draft" decided that "faithful preachers and churches" would be known by the brotherhood journal for which they wrote, and in which they reported, and by those with whom they associated. Ketcherside, twenty-five years old at this time, led in this act and attitude of discrimination and exclusion. Ketcherside succinctly stated his position in the matter: "The Rough Draft represents a compromise with sin, and inasmuch as my chief business is to fight wrong, then naturally I would have to oppose the Rough Draft, because it comes in that category."³⁸ Describing his role in the Kansas City meeting, he wrote, "I was in the forefront in helping make arrangements, and at the meeting made an impassioned speech of denunciation."³⁹ Following the Kansas City meeting he "became a prominent writer in the new journal, though more caustic, critical and censorious than most."⁴⁰ Ketcherside occupied a leadership role in this narrow sectarian position for at least two decades following the publication of the "Rough Draft." He, therefore, dismayed many close associates when, in retrospect, he admitted in print, "I was just simply wrong, and there is no way to minimize the fact."⁴¹

Even before he issued the above statement an observable and radical change had occurred in Ketcherside. The Review for February, 1957, commented that "a sort of rash of Unity and Fellowship proposals is now breaking out in the most unexpected places—for instance, with Carl

Ketcherside for one." In 1958, the Review editor attended a meeting where Ketcherside discussed unity and fellowship with Seth Wilson and Don DeWelt, leaders in the Christian Churches. Allen Sommer reported that during his address to the group he "congratulated Carl Ketcherside on being able to recognize, after 25 years of pushing a faction that the Review's terrible rough draft on Unity had at last been robbed of its terrors."⁴² When Ketcherside acknowledged his error the Review editor printed, "O happy day! The sun Really shines again!"⁴³ Two readers of the Review wrote, "I read Carl's confession in March Review; he has gone farther than the 'rough draft.' . . . Wish I knew what has come over Carl to make such a change,"⁴⁴ and "Well, wasn't that a wonderful climb down for Ketcherside! I am glad he did it and without reservations. But what about all those people he has taught wrong these 27 years?"⁴⁵ Perhaps the most dramatic statement describing the change in Ketcherside came from a former school teacher for the country school where most of the Ketcherside children had attended. Concerning Ketcherside he wrote, "He was an early radical among the radicals. It is a miracle of grace how such a debater, and an able one, could make such a radical change."⁴⁶

Events leading to the radical change in Ketcherside began in 1929.⁴⁷ He conducted a meeting in Detroit, and met Adam Bruce, an elder in the church at Windsor, Ontario, Canada. English and Scotch immigrants composed the membership of the Windsor church, some recently arrived from the old country. Ketcherside spent a day visiting in the home of Adam Bruce, and they made plans for Ketcherside to make a

preaching tour of the Churches of Christ in Scotland and England. World War II, however, delayed his trip until 1947. After the 1947 preaching tour the churches invited him to return for five months in 1951. There was trouble among the churches, especially in Belfast, Ireland, and they wanted Ketcherside to help. He went, and while in Ireland on Easter Monday, the Presbyterian elders invited him to speak in the same church building where Thomas Campbell had preached from 1797 to 1806. Before addressing the church the elders questioned him, as was their custom. These Presbyterian elders wanted to know why the American Churches of Christ had divided, since these churches claimed heritage from Thomas Campbell, whom the Presbyterians regarded as an "apostle of church unity." Ketcherside presented his defense to the elders, but in Ireland and before men of the Presbyterian Church his rationalizations sounded "insane," even to himself. He addressed a full house that day on the subject of "church unity." After his address he meditated on the fact that he had spoken before men and women who were not about to change their opinions to match his, and yet they were willing to meet and work with him in Christian love. This troubled him and he began to see his life as contradictory—preaching on unity while practicing division in order to maintain purity of doctrine. He struggled with this during the night and into the next morning. While tormented by his thoughts, he began reading in "Revelation" where the Bible described the church at Laodicea as "wretched and miserable and poor and blind and naked." Ketcherside saw a parallel between his life and this description. He also realized

that the promise, "Behold I stand at the door and knock; if any one hears My voice and opens the door, I will come in to him," applied to church folks like himself, not to unbelievers. In his own words,

It occurred to me like a bolt out of the clear blue, one of those sort of world shaking experiences that you get occasionally, that shatters you like lightening does a dead tree, that I'd never done that. I didn't have this kind of relationship with Jesus.

He left his apartment and took the bus to the heart of Belfast where he was to preach that night. A deep snow lay on the ground and he entered the bitterly cold church building alone. In solitude he sat and pondered on all his life and what it meant. At that point he saw only emptiness and futility in his past attitudes and practices. Finally he reached the crisis point and said, "Lord, I've had it. I'm at the end of the route. I've come to a dead end street and I'm going to do exactly what Jesus said. I'm going to open the door and I want him to come in." Ketcherside affirmed,

He did just exactly what He said He would do and the old Carl Ketcherside was buried there that day underneath that flagstone they used for the floor of that building, and the man that walked out of there was a totally different person, just a new man. . . . suddenly all the load was lifted off my shoulders and I was given a complete new direction in life. A whole new incentive or a whole new vista opened up to me.

Ketcherside thought next about his former role among the American churches in light of his transformation experience. He realized, "You don't come back home, when you leave a narrow factional leader, with an idea of an ecumenical brotherhood made up of all God's children. . . . if you do you are going to be in serious trouble." Ketcherside

had experienced a transformation of his sectarian attitudes and his concept of Christendom. This transformation led to a gradual resynthesis of his doctrines and practices. His immediate problem was how to communicate this change in a way that would not create further division. To understand how he handled this problem we must note how he viewed his change. Commenting on his experience in the Belfast church building he wrote, "any kind of traumatic encounter calls for evaluation of one's life, past and present, and a reassessment of the direction of the future."⁴⁸ When self-evaluation showed a futile life, the change took place, he said, due to

forces which had been entering my thinking and bringing it to a climax, came together in a crisis experience which made an attitudinal transformation which probably was foundational. Other changes were made in that new found perspective as time went on and some very slowly indeed.⁴⁹

Thus, Ketcherside experienced primarily a transformation of attitudes, his first step towards the creation of a more consistent and harmonious religious system.

Upon returning to St. Louis he began a seven year "honest research" project, in which he reread and restudied the foundational writings of the Disciples of Christ and the scriptures he used to promote and to justify his narrow sectarianism. Subsequently, in 1956 he scheduled a series of Saturday night meetings at the Manchester Avenue Church of Christ in St. Louis, and he revealed to the congregation the changes he had made at that time. In the 1958 Mission Messenger he published some of his newly formed beliefs in a series entitled, "Thoughts On

Fellowship." This series changed the status and role of Ketcherside among the Disciples of Christ. Many congregations and preachers, who had been closest to him, turned against him as he had against Daniel Sommer in 1932. Both E. M. Zerr and Roy Loney, major writers for Mission Messenger, reacted negatively to "Thoughts On Fellowship," and they published their reactions in Mission Messenger.⁵⁰ The words of Zerr resemble those negative responses to the "Rough Draft" in 1932. Zerr recalled that he had seen three major divisions within the church: the organ and societies question, the Bible college movement and the "Rough Draft." He viewed the newly formed doctrines of Ketcherside as "the threat of another division." In his words, "After weathering the storms of the three divisions described above, we are disturbed by a class of reasoning more insidious than even the third one mentioned."⁵¹

While "Thoughts On Fellowship" narrowed the sphere of Ketcherside among the Churches of Christ, it opened doors of association to him among the moderate and liberal Disciples. In 1958, a Labor Day weekend of meetings at Nowata, Oklahoma, enlarged the role of Ketcherside among the moderate Christian Churches. Ketcherside and Leroy Garrett, editor of Restoration Review and a significant influence on Ketcherside during this critical time in his life,⁵² met with Seth Wilson and Don DeWelt, leaders in the Christian Church. They discussed instrumental music in worship and fellowship. Ketcherside wrote that he participated in this meeting "not to attack the position of Don and Seth. . . . but to listen to them as one would listen to any brother, . . . We are not entering a debate, we are going for a sincere study

of a problem which affects us all."⁵³ The meeting pleased Ketcherside and he wrote ecstatically, "It is a wonderful thing to be able to read history, but an even more glorious thing to help make it. I think perhaps that glory has fallen to the lot of Nowata."⁵⁴ Paul Ketcherside, brother to Carl and arranger of the meeting, described it as "the original meeting that kicked off the great surge of thinking among the brethren. . . . We both had a dream, and to a great extent we have seen it fulfilled."⁵⁵ Subsequent volumes of Mission Messenger reveal that Ketcherside began to move among the moderate Christian Churches and their colleges more than he did among the conservative Churches of Christ.⁵⁶ This was not due to his withdrawal from the Churches of Christ, something he vowed never to do, but the moderate Disciples received him more readily than did the conservatives.

By 1958 the resynthesized beliefs and practices of Ketcherside differed radically from his positions during the days of the "Rough Draft" debate. Cecil Willis, a conservative Disciple historian, opined that if Sommer had presented the "Rough Draft" in 1958 Ketcherside would have accepted it, and he exclaimed, "It astonishes me to see how many of you brethren have swung from what I felt to be a radical conservative position to the very opposite extreme."⁵⁷ Cleona Harvey, a close associate of Ketcherside since 1940 and a person conversant with the history of the "Rough Draft" dispute, agreed that Ketcherside promotes today what he opposed in 1932.⁵⁸ A retired school teacher and his wife, formerly of Pearl, Illinois, wrote to Ketcherside that they could "hardly believe our eyes when we read your mellowed articles."⁵⁹

In 1962 Ketcherside enlarged his sphere of influence within the Movement by inviting Howard Short, editor of The Christian and representative of the liberal Disciples, to participate in the annual Hartford Forum, sponsored by several conservative Churches of Christ in Hartford, Illinois.⁶⁰ On August 10, 1965, Ketcherside became the first conservative Church of Christ preacher to speak at the World Convention of Churches of Christ, an ecumenical convention of Disciples. His sphere of influence has reached into many divergent religious groups, including Jews and Catholics, and his speaking invitations have taken him increasingly to the secular campuses of America.

Throughout his activity and change of direction, Ketcherside operated with definite goals, time schedules, and strategies. As his change began, he expressed his goal by saying, "The movement that ended with the establishment of the colleges in the south . . . cannot effect God's purpose on earth. It is time to get the old ark a moverin' again!"⁶¹ This statement reveals his desire to revitalize the Restoration Movement as conceived by his conservative Disciple mind. One decade later he expressed his goal, similar to the former, but reflecting maturity of thought and a more positive emphasis. He wanted "renewal through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power."⁶² He believed that renewal requires restoration, but he also believed that contemporary audiences will respond to a message of renewal. Simply stated, his goal among the Disciples "was to turn the tide of thought within a movement."⁶³

Following time schedules to work toward his goals has characterized the life of Ketcherside. Cleona Harvey, an astute and intimate observer of Ketcherside, commented, "Carl always had everything in his life programmed. . . . You never saw Carl without a pad of paper and a pencil, scribbling away and working on his next talk or next paper. He never was idle."⁶⁴ Ketcherside responded negatively to a request that he write a brief rhetorical manual on his methods of sermonizing, because, as he explained, "I have my life planned under His care, of course, until I am ninety years old."⁶⁵ His schedule for his renewal program existed prior to the 1958 series, "Thoughts On Fellowship," and it reveals his intended role within the religious world.

I also drew up a timetable, so that I could measure my progress and also better allot my time. Within the restoration movement that method involved first my own growth toward maturity in the ideals of the movement, the recapture of a sense of fellowship with the conservative element of the instrumental segment, the extension of the fellowship ideal among those of the non-instrumental orthodox mainline segment, the outreach toward the more liberal Disciple group—the reassertion of the restoration ideal to the theological world generally.⁶⁶

Ketcherside employs a strategy of optimism and attack to achieve his goals and to maintain his schedule. He accepts literally the biblical picture of the Christian warrior fighting spiritual warfare for King Jesus, and he contends that a valuable army attacks, it never retreats. However, he moves cautiously, never advancing with beliefs and practices too rapidly for others to accept.⁶⁷ Secondly, he believes that people, in general, do not think profoundly, and that they have difficulty with philosophical arguments. Therefore, his strategy is to

"Pick out some good old brother from the hills, who has a fourth grade education, . . . and make your argument right squarely to him on his level."⁶⁸ Thirdly, Ketcherside promised himself, after his traumatic change in Belfast, that he would avoid two strategical errors of past reformers. He would remain with his original group, and he would encourage others to do the same rather than divide. Consequently, toward the conservative Disciples from whose bosom he sprang, and who rejected him, his strategy is, "to haunt them and their meetings and lectureships and be so nice that they will have to work overtime to hate me."⁶⁹ In order to communicate this strategy, he frequently tells his audiences, "I am your brother. I love you and there's not a thing you can do about it."

The facts indicate that Ketcherside occupies a diverse and complex role among the Disciples. From his earliest preaching to the 1950's he advocated radical restorationism by a rigid conformity to a pattern of explicit biblical statements and an observance of biblical silences. In order to maintain "purity of doctrine" and "loyalty to the scriptures," he practiced exclusivism until he made it a science. He narrowed and defined the policies, personnel, and perimeters of the "loyal church" according to his concept of the "New Testament pattern," and he imposed the same on those who would be "loyal brethren." In short, within the Restoration Movement he represented its most radical sectarianism. The Belfast experience in 1951, however, transformed his attitudes and image of his role among the Disciples and the greater Christian community. This experience was "foundational" to a subsequent and

progressive resynthesis of the elements of his religious system. This resynthesis occurred mainly from 1951 to 1958, but it continues to the present.

Since 1958 his irenic approach to all parties among the Disciples has influenced the Movement. Dialogue and association rather than debate and exclusion characterize his actions. He no longer imposes on others his concepts of the restored pattern of biblical doctrines and practices. In open, free forums he communicates to the Disciples his resynthesis of their inconsistent and contradictory beliefs and practices. His rhetorical goal is to supplant their inadequate religious system with a more harmonious code that will revitalize the faltering unity-restoration movement of the Campbells, Stone, and Scott.

To conclude that Ketcherside has substituted a denominational role for his former sectarianism is erroneous. The record provides little support for this interpretation. The man and his work among the Disciples reveal a complexity which defies the tidiness of these analytical categories. Despite changes, many elements of his religious system remain unchanged from his baptismal day in 1920. Individually, he has refused to repudiate his heritage or to leave the humble, simple folk and worship of his youth and early adulthood. On the other hand, his doctrines and practices transcend the limitations of classical sectarianism without adopting the motif of denominationalism.

This study has examined the history of the Restoration Movement and has established the fact that many Disciples became dissatisfied with their religious code. They developed inconsistencies and

contradictions in their beliefs and practices, and they splintered the Movement into factious parties. At the height of this fragmentation, Ketcherside grew up in an extreme sectarian wing of the Movement, and he promoted their divisiveness. He experienced, however, a transformation in 1951, after which he progressively resynthesized the dissonant beliefs and practices of the Disciples. Launching upon a ministry of oral and written discourse, he devoted himself to revitalizing the Restoration Movement. The focus of this study turns now to that discourse, to an examination of the invention of Ketcherside that expresses the reformulated code.

Notes

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⁴ Major, p. 189.

⁵ James Stephen Wolfgang, "A Life of Humble Fear: The Biography of Daniel Sommer, 1850-1940," Thesis Butler University 1975, pp. 70, 71.

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- 18 Wolfgang, p. 18.
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³⁵ Allen R. Sommer, "Tales of A Traveler Among 'Churches of Christ,'" The American Christian Review, 104, No. 2 (1959), 10.

³⁶ Intense negative reaction to the "Rough Draft" appeared in several undated letters, printed for circulation among the Churches of Christ. See "The 'Rough Draft' Its Sponsors—Also Its Outworkings—Why We Are Against It," Nashville, Disciples of Christ Historical Society; "A Defense Against the Supreme Effort of the Apostolic Review To Crush Carl Ketcherside, D. A. Sommer and the Macedonian Call," Nashville, Disciples of Christ Historical Society. See also "Why Principles of the Church of Christ Should Not Be Changed," Macedonian Call, (May, 1934), pp. 1, 2. W. Carl Ketcherside, "Why Gaddest Thou About So Much To Change Thy Way?," Macedonian Call, 10, No. 6 (1936), 1-3. Carl Ketcherside, "A Merry Mixup," Macedonian Call, 11, No. 6 (1937).

³⁷ Allen Sommer, "With Which 'Sects' Shall We Fraternize?," The American Christian Review, 102, No. 8 (1957), 15, 16; Allen Sommer "This Question of Fellowship," The American Christian Review, 101, No. 10 (1956), 14; Sommer, "Tales of a Traveler," p. 10.

³⁸ W. Carl Ketcherside, "A Defense Against The Supreme Effort of The Apostolic Review," n.d., n.p.

³⁹ Ketcherside, "A Statement of Fact," p. 3.

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⁴³ Allen Sommer, "Note by Review Editor," The American Christian Review, 104, No. 3 (1959), 4.

⁴⁴ The American Christian Review, 104, No. 6 (1959), 1.

⁴⁵ The American Christian Review, 104, No. 8 (1959), 1.

⁴⁶ Letter received from Lee Carter Maynard, 20 July 1973.

⁴⁷ W. Carl Ketcherside, A Personal Account of the Change in Carl Ketcherside, recorded 21 February 1974, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville (cassette).

⁴⁸ Letter received from W. Carl Ketcherside, 11 August 1975.

⁴⁹ Letter received from W. Carl Ketcherside, 1 August 1975.

⁵⁰ Mission Messenger, August, 1958 through December, 1959.

⁵¹ E. M. Zerr, Preface, Mission Messenger, 30, No. 8 (1958), 9.

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⁵⁴ W. Carl Ketcherside, Letter to Leroy Garrett, 2 September 1958, DCHS, Nashville.

⁵⁵ Letter received from Paul Ketcherside, 12 October 1976.

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⁵⁸ Cleona Harvey, My Acquaintance With Carl Ketcherside, recorded July 1973, DCHS, Nashville.

⁵⁹ Lee Maynard and Nellie Maynard, Letter to W. Carl Ketcherside, 28 January 1961, DCHS, Nashville.

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⁶² W. Carl Ketcherside, The Restoration Movement and the Ecumenical Age, recorded 22 February 1974, DCHS, Nashville.

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⁶⁷ W. Carl Ketcherside, Letter to Leroy Garrett, 3 January 1957, DCHS, Nashville.

⁶⁸ W. Carl Ketcherside, Letter to Leroy Garrett, 10 May 1954, DCHS, Nashville.

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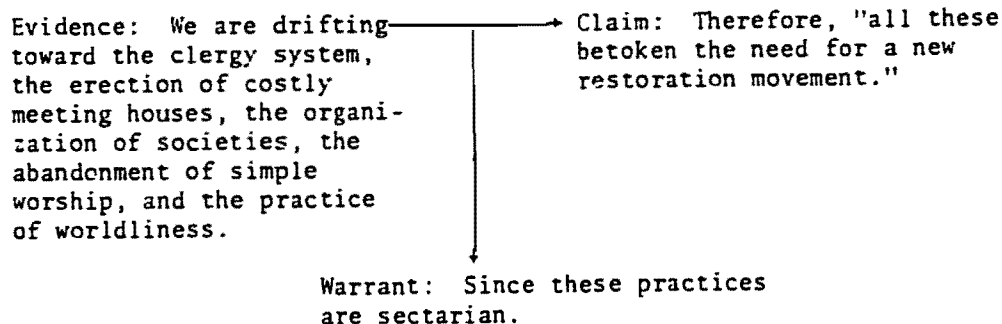
Chapter IV

Ketcherside: "Restore The Restoration Ideal"

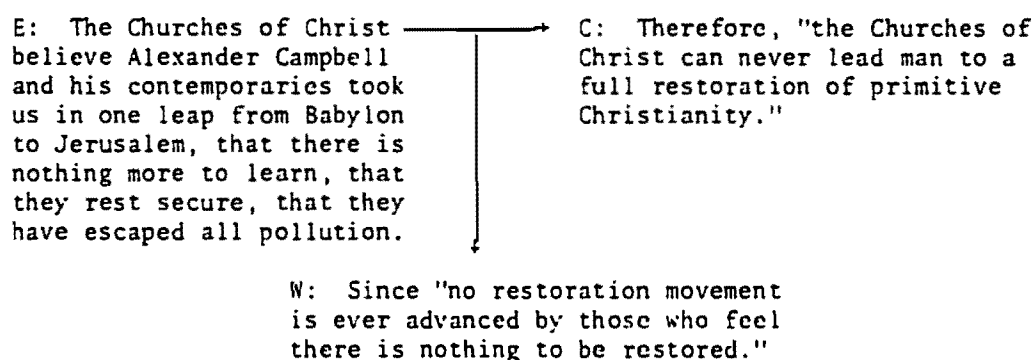
The invention of W. Carl Ketcherside deals with general and specific topics. This chapter examines the general: the discourse of Ketcherside analyzing the disintegration of the Movement, identifying what caused the breakdown, proposing solutions, and describing the emerging renewal of the Movement. The Toulmin model of an argument serves this research as a tool for analyzing the structure and the dynamics of the reasoning of Ketcherside. The model consists of three essential parts: (1) evidence, the ground upon which the argument rests, (2) claim, the conclusion toward which the argument points, and (3) warrant, an assumption that brings the evidence to bear upon the claim.¹ The subsequent chapters present the invention of Ketcherside as he resynthesizes specific doctrines and practices.

The Problem of A Divided Movement.

After his crisis experience and his consequent attitudinal transformation in 1951, Ketcherside progressively perceived serious trouble within the Restoration Movement. He argued, at first, for "a new restoration movement" because of a "drift toward sectarianism among our brethren."² His argument, as we shall see, was more narrow and more parochial than the arguments he made in later years.



The argument rests on a narrow and parochial base, that of defining the practices mentioned as "sectarianism" and of assuming their inherent undesirability. The argument looks inwardly, to the Churches of Christ, and as such, would convince only the few to whom Ketcherside communicated at this time. His argument changed as he gained historical perspective on the Movement, shifting his focus from specifics, like the cost of church buildings, to generalities, like the self-image of the Churches of Christ.³



This argument expresses his conclusion that the mind of the Churches of Christ had become complacent. Also, it illustrates his departure from disputing about external forms and his movement toward penetrating to the heart of their problems.

Ketcherside committed himself to "adopt any principle of truth" without fear of change.⁴ He suggested, therefore, several areas needing reformation: religious vocabulary, means of induction into Christ, worship, and the church name.⁵ Disciples have disputed these topics since their inception, and Ketcherside still followed the traditional emphasis the Disciples had given to forms and methods. He shifted emphasis, however, from restoring the Movement to the "need to restore to this age the spirit of restoration!"⁶ This perspective released Ketcherside from the "pattern" of restoration confinements to the "spirit" of restoration freedoms. It helped him transcend the traditional issues and concepts of the Churches of Christ. This permitted him greater intellectual flexibility to resynthesize those doctrines and practices of the Disciples that he found contradictory. From this time forward, Ketcherside analyzed and attacked Church of Christ inconsistencies as he perceived them. He argued that their divided condition denied their claim of being the "restored church."⁷

E: The Churches of Christ insulated and isolated themselves from those they say they intend to unite; they fight among themselves; they suspect anyone who even repeats the unity plea of the restoration pioneers; there are twenty-five splinter parties of the Churches of Christ, and each claims to be the true church.

C: Therefore, Church of Christism is a modern substitution for the primitive order.

W: Since all the above practices make unity impossible.

The history of the Movement provided Ketcherside with his evidence, and his readers knew that the warrant of this argument existed in their founding documents. Ketcherside reinforced his argument from history by adding this sarcasm: "Some believe that the God of the universe spent four thousand years preparing the world for a Christocracy founded upon the great and abiding principles of opposition to Bible classes, individual cups, unfermented wine, pre-millennialism, lesson leaves, and a host of other things too numerous to mention."⁸

Conservative Disciples reacted to his analysis and attack by charging that Ketcherside taught "new doctrine." He turned the argument against his accusers by, again, appealing to historical fact.⁹

E: Thomas Campbell, Alexander Campbell, Walter Scott, David Lipscomb, Moses E. Lard, Benjamin Franklin, and Daniel Sommer taught that brethren existed in the sects of Christendom.

C: Therefore, contemporary Churches of Christ teach "new doctrine."

W: Since contemporary Churches of Christ deny that they have brethren in the divided sects of Christendom.

Ketcherside viewed the problem of the Movement, not as unique to the Disciples, but as a stage in a cycle through which all movements pass.¹⁰ He recognized that "every such movement, in spite of its noble ideals in the beginning, has terminated in the formation of another sect or faction."¹¹ In his opinion, the thinking of the Disciples produced their problems.¹² Specifically, he claimed that the Movement had lost its original reason for existence, "to unite all the Christians in the sects."¹³ According to Ketcherside, the Declaration and Address,

promoted recovery, renewal, restoration, and reformation.¹⁴ The conservative Disciples, on the other hand, he charged, took this "noble concept" and "hammered it into a conglomerate of narrow, intolerant factions," all lumped together in "The System which we fondly call the 'Church of Christ.'"¹⁵ He highlighted the fact that while the conservative Disciples had lost their unity goal, those whom they had intended originally to unite were uniting.¹⁶ He argued that this situation posed a grave problem for the Movement.¹⁷

E: We stopped recovering; we began to fragment; we became the most divided current religious movement; we debated one another; we lost our unity drive.

C: Therefore, we lost our right to make a plea for unity of all believers.

W: Since those who cannot heal their own divisions cannot prescribe for the divisions of others.

As Ketcherside analyzed it, the Churches of Christ assumed that they had restored all essential truth and practice. They had, therefore, lost their unity drive, had isolated themselves from other religious groups, and had warred among themselves over minor issues. They divided from each other, destroyed the integrity of their unity plea, and created a need to renew the ideal and the spirit of restoration within their own parties.

The Causes of Division.

Ketcherside identified several interrelated causes for the divided and disoriented status of the Restoration Movement. He claimed that among the Churches of Christ the "greatest enemy is the indifference

born of smug complacency."¹⁸ He discovered, also, that the other major factions of the Disciples were "content to defend the status quo, and unwilling to rise up and pursue the ideal of true restoration."¹⁹ He concluded, therefore, that an attitude of complacency and defensiveness contributed to the weakening of the Movement.

Another reason the Movement disintegrated was the abandonment of its founding principles.²⁰ The Disciples began to view the Movement, not as a means to the unity of all believers, but as an end in itself.²¹ This shift of perception "signalled the crystallization of the sectarian attitude and betokened the fact that a new party had been born."²² With this perspective, the Disciples took the final step toward what Ketcherside called, "the fundamental error in our thinking as a people." The Disciples "confused the Restoration Movement with the church of God."²³ Once the Disciples made this conceptual shift they no longer moved to unite all Christians. They entrenched to defend themselves as being the united Christians. Ketcherside described the contemporary Churches of Christ resulting from this viewpoint, and he argued that they were a religious party rather than a unity movement.²⁴

E: The Churches of Christ have as many divisions as any Protestant sect; they enforce many unwritten creeds; they have a clergy system; they operate with the hired one-man pastor system; they conduct college lectureships as their denominational conventions.

C: Therefore, the Churches of Christ exhibit "the nature and characteristics of a party, a sect."

W: Since religious parties possess all the above characteristics.

Again, Ketcherside attacked the inconsistencies of the conservative Disciples with observable facts and events, drawing his invention more from historical analysis than from biblical interpretation. By emphasizing history, Ketcherside adopted a method of invention that produced conclusions incompatible with the traditions of the Churches of Christ. He first identified those presuppositions that the conservative Disciples brought to the process of biblical interpretation. Second, he distinguished between the mutually contradictory conclusions that those presuppositions generated and the Bible itself. This approach, that shaped much of his argumentation, reveals a conviction that Ketcherside held; the problems of the Disciples existed not in the Bible, but in their own history.

After the Disciples departed from their founding principles and became a religious party, other changes further weakened the Movement. They developed a clergy-laity distinction toward the ministry, and they educated a special clergy class that maintained this distinction.²⁵ This provided each faction with trained professionals to defend and to perpetuate the divisions that had occurred.

The Movement also decayed when, according to Ketcherside, the Disciples "lost the distinction between the good news of Christ and the apostles' doctrine."²⁶ This set up a system of knowledge as the primary ground of fellowship. Since all people differ in knowledge, this loss of distinction plagued the Disciples with endless issues for disputation. These issues drew their attention and energy away from their original purpose, the unity of all Christians. They assumed the unenviable

tasks of arriving at "the right" opinions and interpretations of doctrine, and of requiring conformity to those opinions and interpretations as the basis of Christian fellowship.²⁷ This thinking led to what Ketcherside called "the philosophy of maintaining doctrinal purity by division among brethren."²⁸ When a disagreement arose, one side had to capitulate to the other, or the disputants had to divide in order to preserve the "truth" they possessed. Such thinking and practice actually reversed their original unity goal.

The following seven causes, according to Ketcherside, destroyed the integrity of the Disciples as a unity movement: (1) they developed attitudes of complacency and defensiveness; (2) they abandoned their founding principles; (3) they confused the Restoration Movement with the church of God; (4) they adopted the posture and they developed the organizations of a religious party; (5) they lost the distinction between the gospel of Christ and the apostles' doctrine; (6) they based fellowship on a system of knowledge; and (7) they adopted a philosophy of maintaining doctrinal purity by division from brethren.

The Solutions for Division.

The discourse of Ketcherside contains many solutions that he advocated to redeem the Restoration Movement. He argued for solutions involving himself as an individual, involving the members of the Restoration Movement, and a solution he emphasized repeatedly, the reformation of religious vocabulary. The following section sums up his lines of argument.

Ketcherside believed that his role in helping the Movement began with personal reformation. He wrote of "personal soul-searching and self-examination," and "long and bitter inner wrestling."²⁹ He saw himself as a solitary researcher, recovering the lost roots of the Movement and correcting his own errors.³⁰ He claimed that restoration can only start as "a dream in the heart of an individual" who "must be stricken to the dust."³¹ This statement alludes to his transformation experience in 1951, revealing his conviction that he was the "stricken" one who must instigate the new restoration among the Disciples.

Following self-reformation, Ketcherside committed himself to plead for the unity of all believers, to receive them as brothers, and to pursue this policy compulsively.³² He resolved to abandon the contentiousness and the partisan debating that had created the factions among the Disciples.³³ His renunciation of debate marked a dramatic change in his life. Ketcherside had been an able and eager debater, ready to attack in writing and speaking those with whom he differed.³⁴ In his new role, however, he repudiated debate and labored to "restore the lines of communication" among the divisions of the Movement.³⁵ Because he believed his major goal should be the unity of all believers, and because editors and journals had promoted division among the Disciples, he resolved further that he would never allow Mission Messenger to spawn a new party.³⁶ Finally, Ketcherside assumed the responsibility of promoting the restoration ideal within all of Christendom and of contributing to brotherhood across all humanly-designed barriers.³⁷

In summary, Ketcherside outlined a solution for himself that consisted of: correcting himself, promoting restoration and unity, avoiding attitudes and practices that had caused past divisions, restoring the lines of communication, and crossing all party barriers.

For all the Disciples, Ketcherside argued that they could revitalize their Movement by changing their thinking. As a starting point, he recommended that they love truth for truth's sake, lose their anti-intellectual bias, and engage in continual research with honesty.³⁸ He said that the Disciples had to recapture the "spirit of restoration" which characterized such men as Barton Warren Stone, Thomas and Alexander Campbell, and their contemporaries, a century and a half ago."³⁹ This solution excluded a return to the specific methods and programs of the founding fathers, and he argued for this exclusion.⁴⁰

E: Our world has gone through the industrial revolution, two world wars that shattered idealism, and now is filled with intellectual institutions and opportunities.

C: Therefore, the things implemented by the Campbells may not fit into our world.

W: Since historical changes require changes in our programs.

The argument shows that he believed the spirit of restoration, not the pattern of a nineteenth century restoration, would solve their twentieth century problems. He advocated no ties to the founders of the Movement, except as they furnished inspiration and enlightenment for the current situation. Furthermore, he said that the Disciples must communicate the restoration plea in contemporary language, and they must use new slogans rather than their nineteenth century slogans. Since few people

talk about restoration today, he concluded that the Disciples should emphasize the word "renewal," and he coined the slogan, "renewal through recapture of the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power."⁴¹

Changing the thinking of the Disciples and restoring the spirit of restoration demanded, Ketcherside wrote, a changed attitude toward brotherhood and factionalism. He urged a return to the founding principles that he believed the Disciples had betrayed. He described the needed attitude change as a confession to God of the sin of factionalism, a restoration of a true sense of brotherhood, and a recapture of the spirit of tolerance.⁴² He identified, also, several topics (fully discussed in chapters five and six) on which the Disciples needed a change of concept. Concerning the Bible, they must distinguish between "divine revelation and human interpretation," and distinguish between "the gospel by which we are begotten . . . and the apostolic doctrine in which we grow."⁴³ They must repudiate the "loyal church" fallacy by ceasing "to regard ourselves as 'the loyal brethren' to the exclusion of all others."⁴⁴ On fellowship, they must once more think unity, reject the philosophy of division, and tolerate differences of opinions.⁴⁵ Concerning the ministry, they must think in terms of every member as a minister, cease designating one man as the minister, and realize that a group of well-trained professionals cannot alone conquer the world.⁴⁶

In addition to changes in thinking, Ketcherside recommended policy changes as a solution to the dilemma of the Movement. The policies he suggested would decrease the potential for future divisions

among the Disciples and increase the potential for healing their current divisions. He called for an end to public debate, opposing it on pragmatic grounds.⁴⁷

E: We have debated some issues for one-hundred years; we debated no party out of existence but many into existence.

C: Therefore, we should stop debating each other.

W: Since debate never produced unity.

This argument, like those previously reported, attacked the inconsistencies of the conservative Disciples, not with biblical or theological premises, but with historical facts. He avoided the specific issues about which the Churches of Christ had debated and had divided, and he elevated the argument by dealing with the founding principle of the Movement, the unity of all believers. He showed the Disciples that their debates contradicted their founding principle. In place of debate, he urged the Disciples of all factions to join in small groups at midweek meetings for mutual prayer and study, regarding one another as brothers.⁴⁸

To minimize the problem of division at the local level Ketcherside advocated two policies. He urged all Disciples, when they learned a new truth, to stay with their group and to share that truth in love, rather than pull away and form a party around that truth.⁴⁹ Concerning the local autonomy of congregations, Ketcherside suggested that the Disciples live up to their profession of congregationalism. By doing this no problem could extend farther than one congregation. He called for an end to government by "editorcracy," rule by party editors and

journals. Solving wide-spread division, as Ketcherside understood it, demanded that the Disciples "rip apart the paper curtains which separate" and that they respect the decision-making right of each local congregation.⁵⁰

Ketcherside presented several extended lists of solutions for the ills of the Movement.⁵¹ While each list varies from the others, they all communicate similar policies and, as Ketcherside admitted, each list "would find its seed thought or its germinal idea in the document that's known as the 'Declaration and Address.'" The following list of solutions, illustrative of the other lists, includes items already reported in this chapter, and items that chapters Five and Six examine fully.

1. a deep conviction that the divine purpose can never be accomplished by sects and schisms
2. a recognition that neither the correction or improvement of any existing party or creed can ever become the basis of union
3. a rejection of all human opinion as possessing any authority
4. a restoration of the living word of God as our only hope of salvation and the written revelation as our only rule of faith
5. recapture a proper concept of the nature of the church of God
6. a reaffirmation of the distinction between the gospel, which is essential to the birth and being, and the doctrine which is designed for the growth and well-being of the Christian
7. a rejection of all inferences and deductions from scripture premises as terms of communion or tests of fellowship

8. a recapture of a sense of spiritual values so that nothing that is peculiar to any sect or faction among Christians is regarded as equal in importance with that which is required to make us all Christians
9. a refusal to require of any man a profession more extensive than his personal knowledge
10. a substitution of open and honorable discussion as equals for partisan debates between factions⁵²

In his discourse Ketcherside frequently asked the Disciples to reform their religious vocabulary as a means of restoring the restoration ideal. Therefore, this chapter reports this solution separately from the other solutions. As Ketcherside acknowledged, Alexander Campbell had suggested the same solution, saying simply, "we must mean the same thing the Spirit meant when he used the terms."⁵³ Ketcherside claimed that the slogan, "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where the Bible is silent," had served the Disciples as a cliché more than as a governing principle. He argued that the divided condition of the Movement indicated that the Disciples had failed to take seriously the slogan they fondly repeated.⁵⁴

E: We see two dozen parties speaking where the Bible speaks and all saying something different; and remaining silent where the Bible is silent and denouncing the silences of each other.

C: Therefore, the slogan is only a cliché to the Disciples.

W: Since a governing principle would create harmony rather than inconsistencies.

As a solution, he suggested that the Disciples avoid merely parroting the words of the Bible, and that they begin to "speak as the Bible

speaks," restoring each word "to its proper place so that it will once more communicate the thought of God."⁵⁵ He said that this process would reform their concepts and ideas by thinking with Bible words defined by the society that spoke the original language of the Bible.⁵⁶ He identified four language problems that this approach would solve for the Disciples: (1) using words to create distinctions where none exists; (2) using words to deny distinctions where they exist; (3) using words with a specific meaning and giving them a general meaning; (4) using words with a general meaning and giving them a specific meaning.⁵⁷

Analysis of the invention of Ketcherside reveals several solutions he prescribed for the Disciples. In general, he urged them to change their mode of thinking by loving truth, by rejecting their anti-intellectual bias, by engaging in honest research, by reforming their religious vocabulary, and by thinking of the spirit of restoration. He exhorted them to change their attitudes toward brotherhood and factionalism, considering factionalism as a sin and brotherhood as more valuable than private opinions. Concerning their concepts, Ketcherside argued that they change on the nature of the Bible, the gospel, the church, the fellowship, and the ministry. To prevent future division he advocated several policy changes: substituting discussion for debate, remaining with your group rather than separating when you learn a new truth, and practicing local autonomy for all congregations.

The Emerging Restoration.

The invention of Ketcherside, although dealing primarily with the ills and the decadence of a movement, never exhibited negative

pessimism. Optimism characterized his thinking, and he frequently argued that the needed renewal had already begun. Describing the Protestant community in general, he noted that, unlike the days of Alexander Campbell, contemporary Protestants regard sectarian divisions unfavorably. He cited several signs to support this claim.⁵⁸

E: Protestants recognize that unity will cause the world to believe in God, and that denominationalism hinders unity; and they have rediscovered the church, the fellowship, and baptism.

C: Therefore, Protestants are rejecting sectarian division as a sin.

W: Since the above actions stand in opposition to division.

He claimed that a similar movement was gathering force among individual members of the Restoration Movement, and that the reform would come gradually and almost imperceptibly.⁵⁹ As the basis for this optimistic report, he identified ten attitudes which he saw the emerging renewal rejecting: (1) the preoccupation with partisan issues, (2) the arrogance of clericalism, (3) the assumption of our infallibility in the interpretation of scripture, (4) the refusal to take a stand on world problems, (5) the hypocrisy involved in making it appear we have no power structures, (6) the equation of the historic Restoration Movement with the one church, (7) the use of the Bible as a source of proof texts to defend a system, (8) the closed door policy toward dialogue with other religious people, (9) the intrusion of censorship groups into personal lives, and (10) the vanity in some who have majored in Bible and conclude this makes them experts in all other fields.⁶⁰

Ketcherside interpreted the changes within Protestantism and the Churches of Christ as the signs of a third "great awakening." He asserted that, as our culture had sponsored two great awakenings, it was sponsoring a third. The emphasis of the third great awakening, in his opinion, would be renewal rather than restoration; a renewal accomplished through recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power.⁶¹ As a result of this emerging renewal, Ketcherside expected the Churches of Christ to cease existing in their current organizational sense. He predicted they would be purged and more attuned to the "needs of this secularistic society."⁶²

This chapter has reported an analysis of the invention of Ketcherside as he discoursed on the general state of the Restoration Movement, its problems, the causes of those problems, the solutions, and the emerging renewal of the Movement. He concluded that the Movement had lost its unity drive, had debated itself into divisions, and had destroyed its integrity. He identified several attitudes, concepts, and practices as causes for its divided state. He proposed several solutions to remedy the ills of the Movement. He urged, in specific areas, a change of thinking, attitudes, concepts, and practices. He claimed that already an awakening had begun, and that it would emphasize renewal by recovering the proclamation, purpose, and power of the apostles.

In dealing with the general state of the Movement, the invention of Ketcherside displayed optimism. He believed that divisive attitudes and practices of the Disciples would change. The arguments he made

relied upon historical facts rather than biblical and theological premises. Ketcherside argued for the founding principles of the Movement, and he avoided disputations over issues he considered of secondary importance, despite the fact that these issues had been the points of debate and division among the Disciples. Understanding the thinking of Ketcherside about the general state of the Movement provides the basis for the next task, analyzing the invention of Ketcherside as he speaks of the recovery of the apostolic proclamation.

Notes

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- ¹⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Time to Change," MM, 36 (1974), 178.

- ¹⁶ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Facing A Dilemma," MM, 25 (1963), 129.
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Chapter V

Ketcherside: "Recover The Apostolic Proclamation"

The doctrines proclaimed by the Disciples created hostilities within their movement. They divided into three major bodies, each proclaiming mutually inconsistent and contradictory doctrines. Reacting to this situation, W. Carl Ketcherside restudied their chaotic doctrines in order to revitalize the Movement. His revitalization rhetoric, the focus of this study, resynthesized the religious system of the Disciples. This chapter reports an analysis of his invention on recovering the apostolic proclamation, his alternative to their divisive proclamations. His invention examined and reported here includes four problem areas: (1) the Old and New Testaments, (2) the nature and use of the Bible, (3) the gospel and the apostles' doctrine, and (4) the Christian creed.

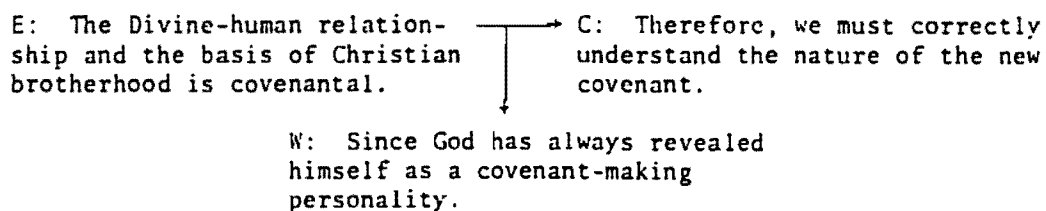
The Old and New Testaments.

This examination of the invention of Ketcherside revealed that the new code he communicated to the Disciples had as its foundation his reformulated concept of the Old and New Testaments. He reworked the traditional concept of the covenants, or testaments, because the Disciples had created a plethora of conflicting bases for the divine-human covenant relationship. Breaking with his former sectarianism, he concluded that the Disciples had misunderstood the whole basic philosophy

of the Christian way.¹ With this universal perspective, he opined that all religious division shared a common cause. His study confirmed this opinion, and he identified a mistaken concept of the new covenant as the cause. In so concluding, Ketcherside, as far as this investigation could find, differed radically from the Declaration and Address, and he contributed significantly to the thinking of the Disciples. He wrote accordingly:

However, as I began to study without Church of Christ spectacles it seemed to me there was a basic problem at the root of all divisions in the religious world, and I finally came to see that it was the result of our misunderstanding the covenantal relationship with God. It soon became obvious that Thomas Campbell was wrong in assuming that the new covenant scriptures occupied the same position now as did the old covenant scriptures under a regime of law.²

Ketcherside examined the Hebrew and Christian Bibles and concluded that the Judeo-Christian God, in His dealings with mankind, revealed himself as a covenant-making personality.³ He defined "covenant" as the manner and method by which God and man come into agreement and sustain fellowship with each other.⁴ Ketcherside argued, therefore, that the proper identification of the covenant is paramount because that will determine for the Christian the basis of his relationship with God and with other believers.⁵ The following diagram reflects his thinking on the importance of the topic.



The history of the Churches of Christ indicates why Ketcherside presented this argument. He was dealing with the people of a unity movement who had divided into warring camps. They had judged the relationship of each other to God and to one another on the basis of their contradictory and inconsistent concepts of the covenant.

The invention of Ketcherside by-passed the endless catalog of issues the Disciples had elevated to prominence along with their intricate systems of disputation. His invention penetrated to the source of their divisiveness, their concept of the new covenant.

Ketcherside, first of all, argued for his concept of the old covenant because, as he wrote, "If we mistake the nature of the old covenant, its scope and breadth, we can as easily be wrong about the new."⁶ Whatever replaced the old covenant became the new covenant, and to resynthesize the concept of the Disciples on the new covenant he began with the old. He stated his claim concerning the nature of the old covenant as follows:

The thirty-nine books from Genesis to Malachi do not constitute the old testament or covenant of God. They contain, in a brief compass, a statement of the covenant, but the greater part of these books was written to and about a covenant people. The covenant which established relationship was one thing. The scripture or writings which grew out of that covenant are a wholly different thing. As long as you conceive the idea that the testament of God, or the covenant of God, the old covenant of God, contains thirty-nine books, that these are all a part of the covenant, you're going to be in difficulty and in trouble with the old covenant scriptures.⁷

He supported this claim with statements from scripture and related historical facts. When Ketcherside argued for a claim that dealt with the content of scripture, he accepted the primary inventive source of

his two predecessors, Benjamin Franklin and Daniel Sommer. Concerning the Bible, all three men reasoned from the conviction that, as Ketcherside stated it, "So far as I'm concerned it's all the word of God."⁸ Ketcherside and the conservative Disciples believed the premises that a personal God existed, and that he had revealed His purposes in propositional form, the Bible. He had no need to defend these premises, but he could lay them down and reason from them, as he did in the following argument.⁹

E: The two tablets of stone were called the tables of the covenant; the chest containing the tables of stone was called the ark of the covenant; the covenant was said to have been made and given at Sinai; the covenant was made when God led Israel out of Egypt, while all other old covenant scriptures were written at another time; the prophecy of Jeremiah was no part of the old covenant because he wrote they had already broken that covenant; the covenant was said to have been made in Arabia, while all other writings of the old covenant scriptures were written somewhere else; the covenant is called the ten commandments written on two tables of stone; God made the covenant with those at Sinai, not with their fathers; the words spoken at Sinai were written on two tables of stone and nothing more was added.

C: Therefore, the old covenant consists of the ten commandments.

W: Since the Bible reveals the truth of God.

This argument excludes from the old covenant all except the ten commandments. Ketcherside, therefore, asserted that the old covenant is

one thing and the old covenant scriptures are another.¹⁰ All of the Hebrew Bible, exclusive of the ten commandments, contains the scriptures that grew out of the covenant relationship established at Sinai on the basis of the ten commandments. These scriptures, rather than being the old covenant, "contain the history of a covenant people, the songbook and sacred literature of a covenant people, and the words of warning and instruction to a covenant people."¹¹

This resynthesized concept of the covenant reveals a paradigm of thought Ketcherside used consistently. He always identified the covenant as a brief, simple message, requiring little instruction or reasoning to understand it. He differentiated between the brevity and simplicity of the covenant and the lengthy and sometimes complex scriptures written to instruct the covenant people how to live. As we shall see, he employed this paradigm to reorder the inconsistent thinking of the Disciples about the new covenant.

We consider now the new covenant, that which supplanted the ten commandments as the new basis for the divine-human covenant relationship. While recognizing that the Hebrew Bible consisted of the Law, the Prophets, and the Psalms, the Disciples spoke and thought of these scriptures as the Old Testament. Unlike Ketcherside, they failed to discriminate between the old testament and the old testament scriptures. There is among the Disciples, therefore, a way of speaking and of thinking about the old testament in terms of a book that another book, the new testament, replaced. We must establish this clearly, because at this point the invention of Ketcherside reveals his most

significant conceptual change. Thomas Campbell believed that the old covenant was a constitution for Jewish worship, discipline, and government. He wrote, therefore, that the New Testament is as perfect a constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the New Testament Church, and as perfect a rule for the particular duties of its members, as the Old Testament was.¹² In contrast to Ketcherside, Thomas Campbell included the entire scope of the Hebrew Bible in his concept of the old covenant, making the covenant a lengthy and complex document, and more importantly, he described the new testament in the same terms. This gave the Disciples, from their beginning, a language to express a way of thinking about the new covenant: "a perfect constitution for the worship, discipline, and government of the church."

Alexander Campbell shared this concept with his father. He described the new covenant, as a written constitution containing the "ancient order" of the "laws, ordinances, and discipline of the Christian Church."¹³ Benjamin Franklin accepted this concept, writing that the New Testament consisted of "pages" upon which one could find the "system" of Christianity. The basis of admission to the two covenants, according to Franklin, was the distinguishing difference between them. Whereas a physical birth brought one "under the old covenant," a spiritual birth brought one "under the new covenant."¹⁴ D. Austen Sommer asserted that the writings of the apostles, forming what is known as the New Testament, are the "law-book of King Jesus," and they present "a complete form of religion."¹⁵ The conservative Disciples expressed this concept of the covenants from their founding to

the present. The old covenant was a book containing a system of worship, discipline, and government for the Jewish church, and the new covenant was a new book, serving Christians like the old book served the Jews.¹⁶

Ketcherside identified this as the "big mistake" of the Disciples and Protestantism in general. He claimed that as long as the Disciples believed that a system of worship, discipline, and government constituted the basis of the divine-human covenant relationship, that they would continue to divide over issues like instrumental music and missionary societies. People differ in knowledge and reasoning abilities, and from this fact he concluded that agreement on a complex document could not be the covenant. He, therefore, broke with the Disciples and argued for a new concept of the covenant as expressed in the following statement.

The twenty-seven books or letters from Matthew to Revelation do not constitute the new testament. The new covenant which God declared he would make was not written with pen and ink. It was never addressed to a church or to the church, and thousands entered into covenant relationship with God, years before one word of the new covenant scriptures was penned. The new covenant is one thing. The scriptures or writings which grew out of it are a wholly different thing.¹⁷

He supported this claim with "premises of common sense," drawn from the history of the Bible and the church, and from the teaching of the Bible itself. In summary, he developed the following argument.¹⁸

E: Many Christians died before the apostles wrote one word; few primitive churches had any apostolic writings; the writings were not compiled for centuries; the church is a product of the covenant and the scriptures are a product of the church, the covenant people; everyone at Pentecost who believed Peter entered the covenant, but twenty-one years passed before one scripture was written; and the Bible says the new covenant was not written with pen and ink.

C: Therefore, the Christian Bible is not the new covenant.

W: Since the writing and compilation of the Bible occurred too late in time, and the Bible reveals the truth of God.

This argument attacked what he called their most fertile source of difficulty, and then he answered two questions that this argument raised: (1) What is the new covenant?, and (2) What is the Christian Bible? The new covenant, according to Ketcherside, is whatever replaced the ten commandments and the legal relationship they established. He affirmed, therefore, that the new covenant is a person and the relationship created is a personal relationship. He described the new covenant as "eternal reconciliation won for us by Jesus Christ, when his own blood acted as the key for entrance into the Holy of Holies."¹⁹ In short, the person of Jesus of Nazareth is the covenant, and Ketcherside concluded therefore, "security does not lie in having all of the right answers but in being in the right person."²⁰ Amplifying upon this concept, he analogized the new covenant with the old covenant, and he explained that the new covenant was written, not on stone and

placed in an ark of wood and gold. The Spirit wrote the new covenant on those human hearts that trusted in Jesus as the Messiah, and that those hearts were the ark of the covenant today. The new covenant system, he claimed, is not one which presents Jesus pointing to a book as our source of hope, but one which presents a book pointing to Jesus as our hope.²¹ He answered the second question by saying that the Christian Bible contains, primarily, doctrine for the instruction of a covenant people, not a system to produce a covenant people.²² This question is answered more fully later in this chapter.

This reasoning employed the paradigm of thought mentioned earlier. Ketcherside identified the new covenant as a brief, simple message requiring minimal instruction and reasoning, in this case, trust in a person as the Messiah. He distinguished between the covenant and the lengthy and sometimes obscure scriptures that instruct those already in the covenant. This resynthesis of the concept of the covenant has far-reaching implications for the Disciples. If, as Ketcherside reasoned, the new covenant does not consist of the twenty-seven books found in the Bible, but it consists of trusting a person, then the rationale for their divisions disappears. Opinions and interpretations of scripture have no relationship to the covenant, but relate only to the growth and development of the covenant people, and as such, provide no basis for division or hostility. In short, recovery of the apostolic proclamation requires that the Disciples distinguish between the new covenant and the new covenant scriptures, and that they cease proclaiming their interpretations of the new covenant scriptures as if they were the new covenant.

The Nature and Use of the Bible.

Recovery of the apostolic proclamation required that Ketcherside deal with a second problem that relates closely to the covenant issue: clarifying the nature and the use of the Bible. The Disciples assumed that an omniscient God had revealed the Bible, that the Bible contained a divine system of worship, discipline, and government, and that the Bible was the new covenant. Taken together, these assumptions forced the Disciples to defend a difficult position. Since God revealed the system, they had to defend its perfection. Since the covenant was a perfect system of religion, they had to understand it, agree upon it, and conform to it correctly. If they disagreed among themselves they had to assume that someone had corrupted the system with innovations. Above all, their position forced them to deny that disagreements and divisions resulted from the nature of the Bible. They argued that the Bible expressed itself so clearly and so simply that all honest people could understand it and agree upon it.

Prior to reordering his beliefs and practices, Ketcherside wrote, "'that which is perfect,' refers to the completed revelation of God," and he espoused the idea that all people could understand that revelation alike. He argued, "What you mean to say is we can never misunderstand the Bible alike. Now the Bible only says one thing. . . . We cannot understand it differently."²⁵ At this point in his life, Ketcherside assumed and defended a position held by the Disciples since their beginning: the obvious simplicity and understandability of the Bible, and the essentiality of doing so. The very adoption of the

slogan, "speak where the Bible speaks and remain silent where it is silent," assumed that the Bible would reveal itself by applying this simplistic formula. Alexander Campbell believed that a restoration of the ancient order of things required only that individuals discard from their faith and practice everything not written in the Bible and adopt what is written.²⁴ Concerning the Bible, Benjamin Franklin affirmed his belief in its perfect completeness as a rule of faith and practice.²⁵ Daniel Sommer viewed the Bible as the plainest book ever written on the subject of religion, and that the honest and earnest could understand it.²⁶ D. Austen Sommer argued that the Lord has given us a perfect guidebook, and he illustrated this concept by showing how, in his opinion, the Bible authorized even items like seats and lights for worship assemblies.²⁷ W. N. Briney wrote that the position of the Disciples to speak only where the Bible spoke promised an end of all strife over opinions, theories, inferences, and fanciful interpretations.²⁸ The editor of Gospel Guardian phrased the issue in an either-or formula: either the Bible is so clear that the honest can understand it, or it is so difficult that the honest cannot understand it. He claimed that most of his readers committed themselves to the first option.²⁹ This simplistic concept of the Bible, that of resembling a cookbook of recipes, dominated the thinking of the conservative Disciples, but not without tensions. The failure in practice to discover and to agree on what the Bible revealed caused some conservative Disciples to confess the difficulties their position caused them.³⁰

The traditional viewpoint of the Disciples toward the Bible, its assumed simplicity, understandability, and perfection as a guidebook,

produced a pattern concept of the scriptures. They assumed that the Bible presented a pattern upon which all could agree, Therefore, they studied the Bible to restore the pattern of worship, discipline, and government that they assumed must have existed in all the primitive churches. Using the principle of Thomas Campbell, to observe biblical pronouncements and biblical silences, the Disciples constructed the pattern from the commands, examples, and necessary inferences they said existed in the scriptures. References to the pattern abound in the discourse of the Disciples, and like the assumed simplicity of the Bible, the assumed existence of the pattern created problems for them.³¹ Ketcherside attacked both of these concepts in his recovery of the apostolic proclamation.

Ketcherside denied that all honest people will form the same conclusions by studying the Bible. He called this assumption a false premise upon which sects build.³² He argued, to the contrary, that not only would disagreements in opinion and biblical interpretations exist, but that these disagreements had nothing to do with the apostolic message, nor with the divine-human covenant. His arguments on this issue relate more appropriately to the practice of basing fellowship on doctrinal agreement, and this study examines those arguments in chapter Six.

Concerning the pattern concept, Ketcherside denied the existence of a pattern in scripture.³³ He called the pattern assumption a crowning error, the root of our problem, and a deep underlying fallacy in our thinking.³⁴ Ketcherside argued that the so-called pattern was a system

of "Church-of-Christism," a compilation and collation of partisan deductions and traditional preconceptions.³⁵ He directed his attack against the primary scripture used to support the pattern theory: "See to it that you make everything according to the pattern shown you in the mountain."³⁶ The scripture referred to Moses and the old covenant institutions. The Disciples assumed, however, that the old covenant contained the thirty-nine books of the Hebrew Bible and, that the new covenant contained the twenty-seven books of the Christian Bible. They argued, therefore, that Christians must follow a pattern as did Moses. Ketcherside reasoned against this argument as follows.³⁷

E: Only the builder needs a blueprint, and the text says the Lord pitched the tabernacle, not man; the church existed years before the apostles wrote the hypothesized pattern for it.

C: Therefore, the Bible contains no pattern for man to set up the church.

W: Since only God builds, and a pattern has to exist prior to the product.

This argument uses both scripture and historical fact as evidence. He also used an argument based wholly on pragmatism, the fact that the Disciples had failed to make patternism work.³⁸

E: Honest and conscientious men cannot see the pattern alike; we are divided over the pattern.

C: Therefore, no pattern exists.

W: Since a pattern would produce agreement and unity.

He reasoned against patternism from a third type of evidence, the content of the apostolic writings themselves. If the Bible contained a

pattern of worship, discipline, and government for the church, then it would read, he argued, like a legal document. He found, however, that the Bible contained a collection of letters written to individuals and groups, and that these letters mentioned many personal matters.³⁹

E: One letter endorsed a runaway slave being returned to his master; one letter thanked a church for a gift; one letter was for a young man with a weak stomach, giving him encouragement; one was a farewell letter to the same young man, asking him to bring to the writer his coat, books, and writing materials; one letter answered letters about marital conduct; and one letter encouraged people to get a job and mind their own business.

C: Therefore, the apostles never intended for the Bible to provide a pattern of worship, discipline, and government for the church.

W: Since a legal pattern would not include items of personal interest and concern throughout its pages.

The entire pattern concept was so out of character with what the apostles wrote that you might as well expect to find, Ketcherside quipped, "a request for a room reservation at the Ramada Inn in the State Constitution" as to expect to find a legal pattern in the Christian Bible.

He attacked patternism from several directions, arguing that the scripture used to support patternism fails to teach the concept, the church existed prior to the writings that the Disciples assumed provided a church pattern, patternism never has worked, and the Bible contains matters incongruous with patternism. The discourse of Ketcherside,

examined in this chapter, struck at the inventive approach to preaching used by the conservative Disciples. They assumed: that the new covenant was a book; that it contained a perfect constitution for the church; that it revealed a pattern for worship, discipline, and government; that it communicated the pattern by command, example, and necessary inference; and that it stated the pattern so clearly that honest people would necessarily adopt the same beliefs and practices. Ketcherside, in his recovery of the apostolic proclamation, gave the argument an entirely new direction. Rather than debate over the merits of the contradictory patterns, he contended that no pattern existed, and that the new covenant was a personal relationship with Jesus of Nazareth, not a legal relationship based on conformity to a code.

The nature of the Bible, according to Ketcherside, resembled a collection of "love letters." They served to bring people into a relationship with Jesus Christ as Lord. They created a divine nature within people, making them automatically and spontaneously react in human situations exactly as Jesus would react if he were there.⁴⁰ After the church came into existence, the people needed instruction on matters of daily living. The apostles wrote the scriptures to meet this need. The Bible, according to Ketcherside, instructs the covenant people how to live in the human predicament like Jesus would.⁴¹ Ketcherside used three analogies to clarify his concept of the Bible. If we think of Christians as citizens of a kingdom, then the Bible instructs for responsible citizenship. If we think of Christians as members of a family, then the Bible gives regulations on conduct from

the Father. If we think of Christians as soldiers, then the Bible is the manual of arms.⁴² Also, Ketcherside emphasized that because the Bible dealt with specific people, problems, and locales, a proper concept of the Bible must, therefore, recognize this fact. While the Bible expresses truth and principles for all people, he suggested that the methods of implementing those truths and principles must change with time and location. The biblical examples of the primitive churches, therefore, serve as a general guideline of what they did and what we may do, but not as a pattern for what we must do.⁴³ In his words, "the pattern of the thrust into the world of mankind that is made by the people of God is not determined by the revelation, but by the nature of the world into which the thrust is made."⁴⁴

A changed concept on the nature of the Bible, from an easily understood book of absolute patterns to a collection of love letters instructing a family how to live, demands a changed use of the Bible. Ketcherside, therefore, argued for a different approach to Bible study. The conservative Disciples studied the Bible to delineate clearly the revealed pattern, and to discover prooftexts for defending their conclusions. They used the Bible like a lawyer uses a legal code to defend his case. The pattern concept of the scriptures forced them into this use of the Bible. For many years Ketcherside used the Bible this way, arguing that just one pattern existed for every age, that they must go back to the early church for the pattern, and that restoration demanded that they be strict conformationists with the Bible.⁴⁵ As he reformulated his concept of the scriptures, however, he

rejected this approach to Bible study, calling it the proof-text fallacy of pattern theology.⁴⁶ He recognized that, because the Disciples had adopted the pattern concept of the Bible, that this had driven them to find a proof-text for all their corporate actions. This created two dozen different patterns.⁴⁷ He recommended, therefore, that they revise their inventive processes in relation to the Bible.

Ketcherside suggested that the Disciples apply rules of interpretation to the Bible, and that they begin by collecting, comparing, and weighing facts.⁴⁸ Since the observance of biblical silences had not worked for them, he urged that they forget their so-called "law of exclusion" and that they value what the Bible contained more highly than what they inferred from its silences.⁴⁹ He opposed the practice of removing any scripture from its context and then arguing from it, an inventive process he formerly had used.⁵⁰ The Disciples had done this in their debates with each other. They defended their differing patterns by applying ancient scriptures to contemporary issues, even when no contextual relationship existed between the two. This use of scripture had created the contradictory and inconsistent beliefs and practices that had destroyed the Movement, and Ketcherside wrote an entire volume, demonstrating the dangers of removing scriptures from their context and using them rhetorically.⁵¹

Ketcherside applied the founding principle of the Movement to the use of the Bible. He affirmed that anyone who used the Bible to create divisions among believers in Jesus had misused the Bible. The history of the Disciples shows that they had done this.⁵² They emphasized

restoring a meticulous pattern to the point that they divided themselves out of the unity movement. Also, he emphasized word study as a proper means of Bible study. He urged suspicion toward any interpretation that relied upon one translation of the scriptures only for its validity.⁵³ He suggested that ignorance of biblical words as originally written created some of the conflict among the Disciples.⁵⁴

Ketcherside called upon the Disciples to distinguish between divine revelation and human interpretation. Revelation, according to Ketcherside, is what God said, whereas interpretation is what we think He meant by what He said.⁵⁵ Confusing the two, he claimed, had caused some Disciples to divide from each other, thinking that to concede on any interpretation would be to admit error exists in the divine revelation. Since they believed God could not err, they concluded that the error resided in those who differed from them, and therefore they defended their interpretations as absolutes and considered their unity as relative. An issue related to the revelation-interpretation problem had developed from a slogan the Disciples used, "in faith unity, in opinion liberty, in all things love."⁵⁶ The Disciples never could agree on the content of faith and opinion. They attempted to divide the Bible into statements that apply today and those that do not apply today, but with little success.⁵⁷ In the resulting confusion, the Disciples mutually accused each other, some for practicing liberty on matters of faith and others for requiring conformity on matters of opinion, with few manifesting love. Ketcherside suggested that they stop studying the Bible this way and think of these issues as matters of understanding.

That way they could recognize all different levels of understanding and admit that all probably would change with time. He claimed that avoiding the faith-opinion approach to Bible study, and considering their differences as matters of understanding, would help the Disciples solve their divisiveness. Using a play on the slogan, he illustrated how his recommended use of the Bible applied to the controversy of instrumental music. He reasoned as follows.⁵⁸

E: If all believed rejecting instrumental music was a matter of faith all would reject it; if all believed instrumental music was a matter of opinion all would permit liberty; some honestly believe it is a matter of faith and some honestly believe it is a matter of opinion.

C: Therefore we will have to stay together until we can decide which it is.

W: Since as long as a brother honestly believes it is a matter of faith and another honestly believes it is a matter of opinion, then it is a matter of opinion as to whether it is a matter of faith or a matter of opinion, and we cannot divide over an opinion.

The play on words from the slogan adds humor to the argument, but the reasoning has its basis in what the Disciples claimed to believe.

Because Ketcherside believed that the Disciples needed to recover the apostolic proclamation, he reformulated their traditional concepts and manner of using the Bible, their primary source of preaching material. He opposed the claim that, due to its simplicity, all honest men could understand the Bible alike, and his concept of the

covenant made such agreement nonessential. He argued from historical fact, the content of the Bible, and the practice of the Disciples that the assumed pattern did not exist. He viewed the Bible as a collection of love letters to a family, teaching them some eternal truths, but prescribing no eternal methods to implement those truths. He urged that the Disciples abandon their attempt to crystallize a pattern from the Bible, and cease their search for prooftexts to support their pattern. As alternatives to the pattern approach to the Bible, Ketcherside suggested that they: emphasize biblical statements rather than biblical silences; never separate a text from its context; use the original language meanings of Bible words; reject any use of the Bible that divides believers in Jesus; distinguish between divine revelation and human interpretation; and consider their differences as matters of understanding rather than matters of faith or opinion.

The Gospel and the Apostles' Doctrine.

Recovery of the apostolic proclamation required a reformulation of concepts in a third problem area, the differences between the gospel and the apostles' doctrine. Some Disciples failed to distinguish between the gospel of Christ that brings a person into the covenant and the doctrine that matures the person already in the covenant. They also confused the gospel of Christ with their interpretations of the teaching of the apostles. The Restoration Movement disintegrated when some Disciples proclaimed and required conformity to their interpretations as God's power to save men, the one gospel mentioned by the Apostle

Paul.⁵⁹ Alexander Campbell had laid a foundation for this problem by using the term "gospel" to describe the entire Christian institution.⁶⁰ By itself, this posed no problem. But after the Disciples formed a legalistic concept of the covenant, and crystallized patterns of worship, discipline, and government for the church, they already had the language given to them by Campbell to equate the gospel that saves men with their interpretations and institutions. Benjamin Franklin argued that the gospel, which no man may corrupt without divine condemnation, included the entire Christian Bible, and he seemed to equate what he called the system of Christianity with the gospel.⁶¹ D. Austen Sommer interpreted the gospel as a set of practices revealed in the Bible, or as he labeled it, the guidebook of the church. By confusing the gospel with practices that he endorsed, Sommer could argue that adding instrumental music to a church meeting perverted the gospel as did adding circumcision to the gospel, a practice condemned by the Apostle Paul.⁶²

Ketcherside, likewise, had subscribed to an all-inclusive concept of the gospel, or more accurately, all-inclusive of what his group included at any given time. He attacked the aged Daniel Sommer because Sommer had published the "Rough Draft," and had toured the Bible colleges in the South. To Ketcherside, this proved that he, not Sommer, contended for the "pure gospel," and he called for a debate to prove it. His concept of the gospel included and excluded only what his party believed and practiced.⁶³ Conservative Disciples perpetuated and argued for the concept that the gospel included the totality of revelation.⁶⁴ The Disciples experienced, however, difficulty with this concept, and

occasionally their discourse indicates this difficulty.⁶⁵ After his transformation experience and after restudying the doctrines of the Disciples, Ketcherside concluded that those who believed that the gospel embraced the whole of the new covenant scriptures held to a false premise. Loss of the distinction between the gospel that saves and the apostolic doctrine that matures, the Achilles' heel of the Movement he concluded, would doom the Disciples unless they corrected this mistake.⁶⁶

The more harmonious concept of the gospel that Ketcherside proposed to supplant the divisive concept the Disciples defended, presented no new thought to the Restoration Movement. Ketcherside merely returned to the writings of Alexander Campbell where, despite the fact that Campbell had used the word "gospel" in a general sense at times, he defined the gospel as seven facts about Jesus.⁶⁷ Ketcherside affirmed that rather than abstract propositions, a code of law, or a collection of apostolic writings, the gospel consisted of facts about the person of Jesus.⁶⁸ He identified these facts as the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and glorification of Jesus.⁷⁰

E: Peter proclaimed the seven facts about Jesus first on Pentecost; no apostolic writings existed on that Pentecost; three-thousand people believed the seven facts; God saved them and added them to the church.

C: Therefore the gospel that saves men consists of seven facts only.

W: Since Peter proclaimed, and the three-thousand believed no other message than the seven facts about Jesus.

The invention of Ketcherside in this argument attacks a chronological problem inherent in the concept that the gospel and the apostolic writings are the same. That concept requires completion of all the apostolic documents before anyone could know and proclaim the gospel. The writing, compilation, canonization, publication, and distribution of books, such as we know the Bible, would have to precede the proclamation of, the belief in, and the benefits of the gospel of Christ. Ketcherside continued, using the same rhetorical strategy as he used in the argument analyzed above, arguing that the gospel could not include the letter that the Apostle Paul wrote to the Romans.⁷¹

| | | |
|---|---|--|
| <p>E: Paul wrote that he had fully preached the gospel; he was in the process of writing the letter to the Romans; he wrote many letters after this date.</p> | | <p>C: Therefore the apostolic writings do not constitute the gospel of Christ.</p> |
| | <p>W: Since the full preaching of the gospel occurred prior to the writing of many apostolic letters.</p> | |

Campbell had used analogy, comparing the church to a nation, to argue that the gospel makes citizens of people and the apostolic writings instruct them in the duties of citizenship. Ketcherside used the same analogy, but he reasoned more frequently from a comparison of the church and the birth-growth process of a human being.⁷² According to Ketcherside, the seven facts of the gospel correspond to the sperm that begat life and that is essential to birth and being. The writings of the apostles correspond to the food eaten after birth that is essential to growth and well-being. While the analogy does not prove that the gospel contains only the seven facts, it clarifies for the Disciples the concept Ketcherside wanted them to adopt.

Ketcherside took another inventive approach, following the reasoning of an earlier Disciple who suggested that some truth imparted life and some truth nourished life.⁷³ Ketcherside argued that, while all truth is equally true, all truths are not equally important. Truth that gives life, he affirmed, is more essential than truth that is incidental to life.⁷⁴ He compared the body of truth to the human body. Remove the head from the body and it dies. Remove the little finger from the body and it still lives. He argued that the Disciples should consider biblical truths as analogous to the members of the human body. Their failure to do so, and their insistence that the gospel included all Bible truths forced the Disciples, Ketcherside claimed, to divide the religious world.⁷⁵ He argued as follows.

E: The Churches of Christ fail to distinguish between truth that gives life and truths that sustain life; they baptize a person upon his faith in Jesus and exclude him later over differences in his growth in knowledge and understanding of many truths; the Churches of Christ have no way or no person to determine how many and upon what truths a person can be mistaken and still remain a Christian.

C: Therefore the Churches of Christ should reject the proposition that all truths are equally important to life.

W: Since the proposition destroys unity and treats people unjustly.

Ketcherside added impact to his argument with sarcasm. He suggested that should the Churches of Christ refuse to reject the idea that the gospel contained all biblical truths, that they ought to be honest with people about it. Before baptizing anyone who confessed faith in Jesus,

he urged them to give that person a list of one hundred issues. Tell him to check off his position on each one. If he makes the right check on each, they should baptize him. If he checks the wrong responses, they should reject him immediately.

The reformulated concept of the gospel that Ketcherside advocated required the Disciples to distinguish between the gospel and the doctrine. The gospel, according to Ketcherside, was truth essential for life and being, and it included only seven facts about Jesus: his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and glorification. These facts constituted the apostolic proclamation to the world in order to bring people into the divine-human covenant. The doctrine, Ketcherside argued, was truth necessary for growth and well-being, and it included the apostolic scriptures written to the covenant people. These documents, the Bible, constitute a course of instruction on how to live within the divine-human covenant. This distinction removed the idea that believing and obeying the gospel required correct understanding and conformity to all the Bible, an idea that divided the Disciples.

The Christian Creed.

Ketcherside addressed a fourth problem area in his recovery of the apostolic proclamation, the nature of the Christian creed. Concerning the creed, that belief essential to the salvation and the unity of the church, the Disciples had adopted the slogan, "no creed but Christ, no book but the Bible." Their discourse on this subject reveals that some Disciples failed to adhere to this slogan and others communicated a

confused message about the creed. The slogan juxtapositioned Christ and the Bible, and in the thinking of many Disciples these two vied for acceptance as the Christian creed. Early in his search for a creed to unite the sects of Christendom, Thomas Campbell had concluded that only Jesus the Christ could serve that purpose, but in the Declaration and Address he emphasized the discovery of a Bible pattern of worship, discipline, and government as the foundation for unity.⁷⁶ Alexander Campbell urged the rejection of written creeds because he claimed a unified church existed prior to the writing of any creed. He argued that the New Testament was sufficient for the unity of the church, and that promoting a creed argued against the sufficiency of the scriptures. What Campbell seemed unable to see was that the unity of the church existed, not only prior to the written creeds but also prior to the written scriptures, and that unity depended on neither according to his own argument.⁷⁷ He opposed creeds, also, because men tended to supplant the Bible with creeds, but he warned that the Bible would serve no better than written creeds if men used it to form unwritten creeds.⁷⁸

As an alternative to the traditional creeds, he argued at times, that one proposition only expressed the Christian creed, "Jesus of Nazareth is the Messiah." At other times he called the entire collection of apostolic writings the creed.⁷⁹ This laid a foundation and gave a language for confusion on the problem of the creed.

Benjamin Franklin displayed, as did Campbell, a lack of consistency when writing about the Christian creed. He upheld the position Campbell took on written creeds, and argued that the primitive church had the

right creed, the law of Christ.⁸⁰ He called the creed the rule of faith and practice for the church, which according to Franklin, was the Bible, the depository of all religious truth and the bond of unity.⁸¹ At other times he wrote of love to Jesus and the person of Jesus as being the bond of union rather than a system of doctrine.⁸² W. G. Roberts, associated with D. Austen Sommer, seemed to have resolved the creed issue as he affirmed, "The Holy Spirit wrote a 'creed' as a basis for Unity," and "We oppose all religious creeds except the Bible."⁸³ This concept of the Christian creed ignores the fact that the creeds of Christendom represent the thinking of groups who accepted the Bible as the creed, and published a summary of what they understood the Bible taught. The Disciples, who made the Bible their creed, differed from other groups only in that they refused to publish and to adopt publically a creedal statement. Other Disciples, while viewing the Bible as the rule of faith and practice for believers, emphasized that Jesus the Christ was the creed that produced believers.⁸⁴

Morrison illustrates the struggle in the minds of many Disciples between Christ the creed and the Bible the creed. In commenting on Christ as the personal creed accepted by the Disciples, he claims that Daniel Sommer "espoused this restoration principle." This espousal, however, he explains as the belief of Sommer that the apostles provided exact details, blueprints, and commands in the New Testament of a clearly discernible church organization, doctrine, and worship.⁸⁵ Apparently, on the issue of the creed, Christ and the Bible occupied such an equal position in the minds of some Disciples that they shifted

thought from Christ as the creed to the Bible as the creed without consciously doing so. While some Disciples proclaimed Jesus as the creed and others proclaimed the Bible as the creed, most Disciples probably proclaimed confusion about the creed.

During his earlier ministry, Ketcherside held the position that the Bible only was the proper creed. He told unbelievers to go all the way back to the Bible alone as their hope, and he urged believers to come together on the New Testament.⁸⁶ He emphasized the Bible as being the focus of belief that unites, an emphasis commonly heard among conservative Disciples.⁸⁷ After serious research, precipitated by his attitudinal transformation, he concluded that what he and his group had proclaimed as the creed was not the Bible. He called his former creed "Church of Christism," a bundle of views, explanations, and traditions. He charged the Churches of Christ with proclaiming unwritten creeds, and he asserted that their creeds would never produce unity.⁸⁸ The concept of the Christian creed reformulated by Ketcherside contributed nothing new to the thought of the Disciples, but he did state his position clearly, and he left no confusion concerning the creed and the relationship between the Christ and the Bible on this issue. One fact only constituted the creed, according to Ketcherside: Jesus is the Messiah.⁸⁹ The hope of salvation resides in a person because, he affirmed, only the Way of the Living Word can be absolute.⁹⁰ Ketcherside recognized here a fact that seemed to have escaped the founders of the Movement. Even if a person accepts the Bible as the absolute inspired message of God, human understanding of that message can never be absolute, and can,

therefore, never serve as a creed to unite men. Using the phraseology of his former years, but with a new perspective, he urged that we go back, back, back beyond every written creed to a transcendent, dynamic creed that can unite. That creed, he said, is not a precept, but a person.⁹¹ The person of Jesus, according to Ketcherside, is the Christian creed, not the Bible. He distinguished between Jesus, the Living Word and the Bible, the written word. The relationship between the two, in the Christian system as conceived by Ketcherside, has the Bible pointing to Jesus as the creed, not the other way around.⁹²

The messages communicated by the Disciples became contradictory and inconsistent, fragmenting them into mutually hostile parties. Ketcherside proposed a recovery of the apostolic proclamation to remedy this divided condition. Examination of his invention dealing with the apostolic proclamation revealed that he reformulated the message of the Disciples on four related topics. First, he reformulated their concept of the new covenant. The Disciples had viewed all the apostolic writings as the new covenant. Second, Ketcherside argued that trusting in Jesus was the new covenant. Concerning the nature of the apostolic writings, he argued that they provided a course of instruction to mature the covenant people, not a pattern for worship, discipline, and government. He urged the Disciples to use the Christian Bible as a compilation of love letters from the Father to his children, not a code of law to establish legal ties among people. The third topic, the gospel of Christ, he defined as seven facts about Jesus, not the entire apostolic writings, as many Disciples had proclaimed. Finally, he

clarified the confusion existing between the Christ and the Bible on the problem of the creed. He concluded that the Disciples should proclaim only the Christ as the creed, and they should use the Bible to point to Christ, not the reverse.

This research has extracted from the invention of a revitalization movement rhetor a complete picture of how he viewed his decaying religious system, what he understood caused it to decay, what he suggested as solutions, and how he envisioned the emerging renewal. Examination of his invention revealed also his resynthesis of part of the old code, reworking its components, eliminating some and adding new ones. This research focuses now on the invention of Ketcherside as he attempted to give a more dynamic purpose to the Restoration Movement by recovering the apostolic purpose.

Notes

- ¹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "A Spiritual Adventure," MM, 22, No. 3 (1960), 8.
- ² Letter received from W. Carl Ketcherside, 14 August 1976; W. Carl Ketcherside, The Covenant, recorded 30, 31 March 1977, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, TN (cassette); hereafter cited as DCHS, Nashville.
- ³ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Covenant With Noah," Mission Messenger, 22, No. 4 (1960), 2; hereafter cited as MM; The Death of the Custodian (Cincinnati, OH: Standard Pub. Co., 1976), p. 15.
- ⁴ Ketcherside, The Covenant.
- ⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The First Testament," MM, 22, No. 7 (1960), 8; "The Big Mistake," MM, 30 (1968), 155; Death of the Custodian, p. 63; The Covenant.
- ⁶ Ketcherside, "The First Testament," p. 6.
- ⁷ Ketcherside, The Covenant; "A Spiritual Adventure," p. 3; "The Covenant With Noah," p. 6.
- ⁸ Ketcherside, The Covenant; Simple, Trusting Faith (St. Louis: Mission Messenger, n.d.), pp. 57-71; Benjamin Franklin, "Address on Bible Revision," in They Heard Him Gladly, O. Castleberry (Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Pub. Co., 1963), p. 283; Matthew C. Morrison, Like A Lion (Murfreesboro, TN: DeHoff Publications, 1975), pp. 41, 42.
- ⁹ Ketcherside, "The First Testament," p. 8; The Covenant.
- ¹⁰ Ketcherside, The Covenant.
- ¹¹ Ketcherside, "The Covenant With Noah," p. 6; "The First Testament," p. 6; The Covenant.
- ¹² Thomas Campbell, The Declaration and Address (1809; rpt. St. Louis: Mission Messenger, 1972), p. 45.
- ¹³ Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order," Christian Baptist, 2 (1825), 174; "The Union," Millennial Harbinger, 3 (1832), 193, 195.

¹⁴ Benjamin Franklin, "Our Position As A Religious Community," in Biographical Sketch and Writings of Elder Benjamin Franklin (Indianapolis, IN: Daniel Sommer, 1906), pp. 104, 230; "The Two Covenants," in The Gospel Preacher: A Book of Twenty Sermons, 14 ed. (Cincinnati: G. W. Rice, 1879), I, pp. 206, 212.

¹⁵ D. Austen Sommer, The Churches of Christ (Indianapolis: Octographic Review, 1913), p. 35.

¹⁶ B. A. Abbott, The Disciples (St. Louis: Bethany Press, 1924), p. 69; Issac Errett, "Our Position," in Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union, ed. C. A. Young (Chicago: The Christian Century Co., 1904; rpt. Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1955), p. 297; Issac Errett, "First Principles," in New Testament Christianity, III, ed. Z. T. Sweeney (Columbus, IN: New Testament Book Fund, Inc., 1930), pp. 425, 426; Harold Ford, A History of the Restoration Plea (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1952), p. 15; Roy E. Cogdill, "Fifteen Minute Rebuttal Speech," in The Arlington Meeting, ed. Cecil Willis (Marion, IN: Cogdill Foundation Publications, 1976), p. 62; Joe Neil Clayton, The Thunderous Silence of God (Marion, IN: Cogdill Foundation Publications, 1972), p. 59; Ron Halbrook and Steve Wolfgang, "Removing A Few 'Nails' from the Restoration Door," Truth, 18 (1974), 733.

¹⁷ Ketcherside, The Covenant.

¹⁸ W. Carl Ketcherside, The Holy Spirit and the Party Spirit, recorded 20 March 1963, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

¹⁹ Ketcherside, "The Big Mistake," pp. 154, 155.

²⁰ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Simple Solutions," MM, 29 (1967), 75.

²¹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Analysis of Legalism," MM, 22, No. 8 (1960), 3, 9, 10; "Adventures in Religion," MM, 24, No. 12 (1962), 8, 9; The Covenant.

²² Ketcherside, "The Big Mistake," pp. 152-156; The Covenant.

²³ W. Carl Ketcherside, "That Which Is Perfect," MM, 13, No. 11 (1951), 5; To Every Man That Asketh: A Collection of Sermons Prepared by Missouri Preachers (n.p.: n.d.), pp. 90-97; "Committees or Congregations," MM, 8, No. 11 (1947), 3.

²⁴ Alexander Campbell, "A Restoration of the Ancient Order of Things," Christian Baptist, 2 (1825), 152, 153.

²⁵ Franklin, "Our Position As A Religious Community," in Sketch and Writings, p. 109.

²⁶ Daniel Sommer, Appeal For Unity (Indianapolis: Apostolic Review, n.d.), p. 76; "Is The Bible A Plain Book?," in Plain Sermons, (Indianapolis: Daniel Sommer Publisher, 1913), I, p. 24.

²⁷ D. Austen Sommer, pp. 198, 199.

²⁸ W. N. Briney, "What the Movement Stands For," in The Watchword of The Restoration Vindicated (Cincinnati: Standard Pub. Co., n.d.), pp. 26, 27.

²⁹ "A Faith to Live By," Editorial, Gospel Guardian, 21 (1970), 580, 581.

³⁰ Alan E. Highers, "How to Attain and Maintain Fellowship," in The Arlington Meeting, p. 388.

³¹ Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, 2nd ed. (1839; rpt. Nashville, TN: Gospel Advocate Co., 1974), pp. ix-xi, 3, 145, 147, 275, 276; Gospel Advocate, 26 No. 1 (1886), 6. J. B. Jones, "The Genius and Spirit of Our Plea As Disciples of Christ, or Christians," in Recollections of Men of Faith, ed. W. C. Rogers (1889; rpt. Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1960), pp. 111, 112; F. Walden, "Statement of the Principles and Object of the Religious Movement of the Disciples of Christ," in The Iowa Pulpit of the Church of Christ, Its Aim and Work, ed. J. H. Painter (St. Louis: John Burns Co., 1884), pp. 13, 17, 18, 30; Morrison, Like A Lion, p. 161; F. G. Allen, "Our Strength and Our Weakness," in New Testament Christianity, II, p. 241; "Hidden Poison and Body of Error," Editorial, Firm Foundation, 80 (1963), 562; D. V. Radar, "Unity and Tullahoma, Tennessee (II)," Truth, 17 (1973), 650; R. Halbrook, "I Think Just As I Always Did Whatever I May Say (II)," Truth, 18 (1974), 281; Mike Willis, "Is the Restoration Principle Valid?," Truth, 18 (1974), 585; Clayton, The Thunderous Silence of God, pp. 9, 12; Mike Willis, "How the Restorers Used New Testament Examples," in The Restoration Heritage in America: A Biblical Appeal for Today (Marion, IN: Cogdill Foundation Publications, 1976), pp. 53, 54.

³² W. Carl Ketcherside, "Error and Sin," MM, 36 (1974), 27; Our Movement, Its Present Dilemma, recorded 25 April 1963, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

³³ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Reply to Above," MM, 20, No. 10 (1958), 3; "The Question Box," MM, 30 (1968), 117; "According to the Pattern," MM, 32 (1970), 22; "The Touch of Life," MM, 31 (1969), 34; "With Simple Joy," MM, 26 (1964), 90.

³⁴ W. Carl Ketcherside, Unity in A New World, recorded 2 July 1964, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Things to Come," MM, 31 (1969), 178; "According to the Pattern," p. 19.

- 35 "Things to Come," p. 179; "According to the Pattern," p. 26.
- 36 Heb. 8:5.
- 37 W. Carl Ketcherside, The Christian Approach to Problems in the Church, recorded 6 November 1972, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Question and Answer Forum, recorded 7 November 1972, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Our Personal Pattern," MM, 32 (1970), 33-43.
- 38 W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Money Pattern," MM, 32 (1970), 97-99.
- 39 Ketcherside, "Our Personal Pattern," pp. 36, 37; "The Apostolic Attitude," p. 148.
- 40 W. Carl Ketcherside, "Law and Morals," MM, 31 (1969), 149; "The Apostolic Attitude," p. 146; A New Kind of Freedom for the World, recorded 3 July 1964, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "The Legal Tangle," MM, 37 (1975), 52, 56, 57.
- 41 Ketcherside, The Holy Spirit and the Party Spirit; Areas of Needed Restoration, recorded 18 May 1977, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); The Covenant.
- 42 W. Carl Ketcherside, "Living Letters," MM, 31 (1969), 78.
- 43 W. Carl Ketcherside, "A Pattern of Freedom," MM, 32 (1970), 49-58.
- 44 Ketcherside, The Covenant.
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Chapter VI

Ketcherside: "Recover the Apostolic Purpose"

The Disciples of Christ originated in a movement for uniting the Christians in all the sects, but rather than unite Christians, they divided their movement into sects. They adopted the view that the Bible contained a specific pattern of worship, discipline, and government for the church, and they felt compelled to restore that pattern as the basis of Christian unity. They lost the distinction between the gospel that gives life and the apostles' doctrine that sustains life. They equated the Christian creed with their interpretations of the Christian Bible. These concepts produced a number of different patterns, gospels, and creeds among the Disciples, and the proponents of each proclaimed their viewpoints and enjoined them on others as the basis of brotherhood. As the Disciples divided into their respective groups and engaged in the defense and promotion of their views, they weakened, if not lost their original purpose, the unity of all Christians. Ketcherside, sensing the contradiction of a divided unity movement, attempted to renew the restoration ideal by recovering the apostolic purpose, bringing all things together under Christ. This chapter examines his invention in which he reformulated beliefs and practices of the Disciples related to the unity purpose of the Restoration Movement. Five topics constitute the focus of this chapter: birth into the body of Christ, entrance into

the fellowship of Christ, maintaining the unity of Christ, ordained to the ministry of Christ, and living the worship of Christ. In relation to each topic, Ketcherside argued that if the Disciples would recover the apostolic purpose they would renew the restoration ideal within the Movement.

Birth Into the Body of Christ.

Groups of Disciples crystallized around differing patterns of the body of Christ, the church that, respectively, they inferred from the Bible. Each group equated its pattern with the one gospel of Jesus, and they enjoined their patterns upon each other as terms of fellowship. These developments shifted their purpose from uniting the Christians in all the sects to converting all the people to their sect. This purpose created an aggressive, competitive spirit among the Disciples, manifesting itself in public debates, divisions within the Movement, and a loss of their unity drive. In order to recapture the apostolic purpose, the birth of individuals into the body of Christ, Ketcherside reformulated the concept of the church commonly held among the Disciples.

The Disciples have never doubted that the apostles intended to unite all people in one church. Thomas Campbell penned the watchword of the Movement when he wrote that the Church of Christ on earth is essentially, intentionally, and constitutionally one.¹ Loss of the unity purpose came with a narrowing of the concept of the church. While affirming that only one church existed, the conservative Disciples meant their pattern of the church.² Throughout his ministry, Ketcherside

preached that the apostles founded only one church. He believed this concept so strongly that he opposed racism that divided the church along a color line long before it became popular to hold this position.³

Ketcherside could not accept the existence of two or more churches any more than he could believe that two Gods existed.⁴ He argued that the language of the Disciples betrayed them by revealing that they had ceased to move and had divided into sects.⁵

E: Each movement in history culminated in a sect. The Disciples use sectarian language to speak of "our brethren" and "your brethren."

C: Therefore, the Disciples have become sectarian.

W: Since the one church contains all the brothers and sects exclude some brothers.

The Disciples had traditionally contended that the restored church of the Bible would wear a Bible name.⁶ Ketcherside rejected this concept because he developed a universal image of the church.⁷ He claimed that the Bible terms referring to the church were common nouns, and that using these terms as divisive labels denominationalized and sectarianized the one universal church.⁸ Church names, if used at all, Ketcherside argued, should designate the place where Christians meet, not their separation from other Christians.⁹ He opposed church names on the basis of his universal concept of the church.¹⁰

E: The apostles established only one church.

C: Therefore it has no name.

W: Since names are needed only when many are included in a single class.

The name argument, in short, contradicted the unity purpose of the apostles and of the Restoration Movement.

Concerning other aspects of the church, Ketcherside remained unchanged throughout the years. He consistently opposed the idea that the apostolic purpose included the acquisition of real estate and the construction of church buildings. He argued that the Greek word ekklesia, translated in the English Bible as "church," always referred to people gathered together, not to the building or to the place of the gathering.¹¹ Because the Disciples confused the church with real estate, he accused them of living B. C. lives in an A. D. world. By this he implied that their concept of the church was more Jewish than Christian.

E: Judaism emphasized the temple, calling it the sanctuary of God. The Disciples emphasize their church buildings, calling them sanctuaries.

C: Therefore, the Disciples have regressed to the concepts and practices of Judaism.

W: Since the Jews and the Disciples show no significant difference concerning religious buildings.

His argument infers that the Disciples had lost the apostolic purpose in a system of temple legalism and ritual that, by its nature, excluded people.

Ketcherside also remained unchanged concerning the legitimacy of extra-congregational agencies to enhance the program of the local congregation. He believed these agencies were incongruous with the freedom of each congregation as the apostles had intended. He exhorted the Disciples to cease organizing extra-congregational societies in order to maintain congregational freedom within the Movement.¹²

He introduced a radically changed concept of the church to the conservative Disciples, by insisting that the church consisted of individuals only who had established a covenant relationship with God through trust in Christ. The Disciples had thought and had spoken of the church as an institution composed of organized congregations, all believing the same doctrines and all conforming to the same practices.¹³ They attempted, therefore, to organize congregations by conforming people to a pattern of belief and practice. Ketcherside emphasized a non-institutional concept of the church, with the purpose of uniting individuals together by relating them to Christ. His invention frequently attacked the idea that the parties of Christendom constitute the one apostolic church.¹⁴ He argued that the monolithic, institutionalized, regimented concept of the church conflicted with biblical descriptions of the primitive apostolic churches.¹⁵

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| E: The scriptural descriptions of the apostolic church in Asia do not fit an institutional, regimented concept of the church. | | C: Therefore, the church the apostles established was not a collection of congregations composed of regimented people. |
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W: Since the apostles recognized that saved people existed in congregations that were dead, proud, and arrogant, that taught vicious doctrine, and that tolerated a person who encouraged immorality.

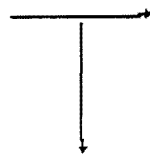
His argument emphasized that the apostolic writer recognized each of these congregations, with their gross imperfections, as legitimate churches, and that the apostle imposed no institutional conformity as a prerequisite for this recognition. Ketcherside adamantly opposed the institutionalized concept of the church. He believed it was a

leading cause of religious decay throughout the entire Christian community. His opposition became caustic at times, as the following illustrates.

Christendom is the huge umbrella of many patches and colors, providing shelter and shade for every form of political and religious delusion and chicanery. It is the sprawling tent under which millions huddle to watch the antics of religious clowns and buffons, and to see the three-ring circus of professional entertainers, putting on a constant show for the shekels thrown them by the fear-motivated spectators. It is the labyrinthine maze which entraps and ensnares the unwary, and dooms them to the perpetual and hopeless search for happiness, promising them everything and delivering nothing.¹⁶

Ketcherside left no doubt that his condemnation of the institutional concept of the church included the Churches of Christ.¹⁷ He not only refused to recognize as churches, those groups with names like "Methodist," "Baptist," or "Roman Catholic," but he also asserted that no such thing as the "Christian Church" or the "Churches of Christ" existed. All these groups, according to Ketcherside, constituted religious parties that had crystallized around a personality, doctrine, or system of theology. He denied that the apostolic purpose created any of the divisions of Christendom.¹⁸ In this respect, he said that the Disciples made one of their gravest errors, and they took the "move" out of the Movement when they equated the Restoration Movement with the apostolic church.¹⁹ He argued that the church of the first century and the nineteenth century unity movement of the Disciples necessarily differed.²⁰

E: Jesus has never been a head without a body, a king without a kingdom, a shepherd without sheep, or a groom without a bride.



C: Therefore, the Restoration Movement cannot be equated with the apostolic church.

W: Since the apostles established the church in the first century and the Disciples established the Restoration Movement in the nineteenth century.

Some Disciples assumed that God recognized as His church only Churches of Christ that opposed instrumental music, extra-congregational agencies, and the professional clergy system. The invention of Ketcherside struck at a difficulty inherent in this position, the assumption that the church of God vanished from the earth at some time, and it reappeared in the nineteenth century with the Campbells, or with Benjamin Franklin, or with David Lipscomb, or with Daniel Sommer. His argument used historical dates and figures of speech showing the relationship of Jesus to His church. This argument highlighted the difficulty assumed by those who equated the apostolic church with the Restoration Movement. Restoring the church, according to Ketcherside, does not mean that the church ceased to exist any more than restoring a painting means that the painting ceased to exist. Restored paintings have had centuries of accretions removed so the viewers can see the paintings as they came from the hands of the artists. A restored church, like a restored painting, has had the accretions removed, but it never ceased to exist.²¹

Ketcherside based his invention related to the church on his noninstitutional concept of the church. This concept underlies every

argument, explicitly or implicitly. He repeated this theme constantly, and on this point he weakened the rationale for the sectarian purposes of the conservative Disciples. People are saved or lost, Ketcherside affirmed, as individuals, not as members of a Baptist group, Methodist group, Church of Christ group, or any group.²² He emphasized throughout his discourse that individuals related to each other through a personal covenant relationship with Jesus, rather than groups bound together by a religious system, express the apostolic purpose.²³

Ketcherside advocated, however, that individuals should organize themselves into local congregations and meet frequently. For Christian education, benevolence, and nurture he believed that local congregations, to the exclusion of all other agencies, had a divine calling and responsibility to maintain vigorous programs.²⁴ These programs, however, should exclude the authoritarianism that some Disciples had practiced. Ketcherside denied that the church should act as the official interpreter and official guardian of orthodoxy for individuals. He believed that the supreme court for biblical interpretations could only be each individual conscience.²⁵ Rather than an institutionalized system of beliefs and practices with multiple agencies exercising authoritarian power, the purpose of the church, as Ketcherside conceived it, was to develop each individual to the maximum use of his gifts. He urged that each church building become a drilling ground and an arsenal for spiritual soldiers. Church meetings, according to Ketcherside, should equip each person to render service to needy people and to combat evil.²⁶

Since Ketcherside believed that individuals bound together by faith in Jesus for their mutual development constituted the church, he

concluded that local autonomy was the only acceptable form of church government. According to Ketcherside, the church government needed to achieve the apostolic purpose consisted of a local assembly from which the members chose elders to guide them by example and teaching, not by coercion.²⁸ Anything larger than the local congregation he regarded with suspicion.²⁹ Any means of imposing universal legislation he opposed.³⁰ The Disciples had always advocated congregationalism, and Ketcherside merely reasserted this principle, but he applied it specifically to a practice that he claimed had divided the Disciples, government by journalistic oversight. He charged the Churches of Christ with failing to practice their profession. Rather than government by local autonomy, he accused them of practicing government by distant autocracy. He said that they had exalted the editors of their brotherhood journals, had crystallized around the patterns each respective journal promoted, and had submitted to "editorcracy," government by editorial rule.³¹ This form of government promoted the purposes of religious parties. The invention of Ketcherside called the Disciples to a concept and a government for the church that would recover the apostolic purpose, unifying individuals in Jesus.

Uniting people into the body of Christ on earth involved the apostolic practice of baptism. The Disciples have debated over baptism since their beginning. The subject created rifts among them when they disagreed about how to regard people who claimed faith in Jesus, who refused immersion as baptism, but who wanted to join the Disciples. Some Disciples practiced open membership, receiving the unimmersed into

the local congregation. At the other extreme, some Disciples rejected all people that a minister of their particular party had not immersed. These contradictory beliefs and practices led the Disciples into mutual debating on baptism and divided the Movement. To recover their original unity purpose, Ketcherside reformulated their beliefs and practices concerning baptism.

Some Disciples equated the gospel of Jesus with the entire Christian Bible and with their interpretations of the Bible. They included in the gospel all that they understood about baptism. They concluded, therefore, that a person who had been immersed while lacking their biblical understanding about baptism needed their instruction and reimmersion.³² While Ketcherside, like Campbell, recognized only immersion as being apostolic baptism, he rejected the concept that the efficaciousness of baptism depended upon the level of doctrinal knowledge achieved by the baptismal candidate.³³ Ketcherside compared the design of baptism to the judicial act of forgiveness rendered by a judge. He argued that judicial forgiveness does not depend upon the knowledge of the wrong-doer, but upon the grace of the judge.

E: God promised to remit the sins of all believers who receive baptism. Remission of sins is a judicial act that takes place in heaven. Remission of sins is God's design for baptism, not man's design. Remission of sins is an executive act of pardon that takes place in the mind of God.

C: Therefore, baptism into the one body does not depend on human knowledge.

W: Since the granting of forgiveness to an individual by a judge does not depend upon the knowledge achieved by that individual.

Ketcherside emphasized that the grace of God, not the understanding of man, gave baptism its significance. He further argued that on such matters as baptism the grace of God would override the involuntary ignorance of a person.³⁴ If that ignorance kept a person from receiving immersion, God would still accept him, Ketcherside opined, but he claimed that this judgment did not belong to humans.³⁵ The generous attitude of Ketcherside toward the unimmersed resulted partly from his definition of the gospel as seven facts about Jesus. He argued that baptism was not the gospel that saved, but it was the saving response of persons who believed the gospel.³⁶

E: The gospel that saves includes the facts of the life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and glorification of Jesus.

C: Therefore, baptism is not the gospel.

W: Since the human response to the good news about Jesus cannot be the good news about Jesus.

This argument implies that, although the truth of the gospel may be absolute, the human response will always be relative to the understanding of the respondent. As such, no human has any right to judge that response.

Ketcherside rejected the idea that the significance of baptism depended upon the knowledge of the baptismal candidate, but he also rejected open membership. He said that open membership destroyed the significance of baptism.³⁷ Open membership, according to Ketcherside, encouraged a person to determine his relationship to God on a purely

personal and subjective basis rather than upon the explicit will of God expressed by the apostles.³⁸ Ketcherside opposed the position Alexander Campbell took in the "Lunenburg Letter" because Campbell had applied the name "Christian" to the unimmersed.³⁹ Baptism, Ketcherside claimed, constituted the birth process into the body of Christ and it inducted a person into Christ.⁴⁰

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| E: A Christian is a person who has been born into the body of Christ and who has been inducted into Christ. | | C: Therefore, only the immersed can be scripturally called Christians. |
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W: Since the apostles taught that birth into the body and induction into Christ happened at immersion.

His reasoning struck at the extreme baptismal practices of the Disciples. Those practicing reimmersion destroyed the significance of baptism by making the knowledge of man more important than the grace of God. Those practicing open membership destroyed the significance of baptism by making personal preference more important than the explicit will of God. Both reimmersion and open membership placed the induction of a person into the body of Christ upon a subjective basis, making these practices potentially divisive rather than unitive.

The invention of Ketcherside presented nothing significantly new to the Disciples concerning baptism. Ketcherside merely stepped back from their current divisive beliefs and practices and reasserted the position the Disciples had generally held during their earliest years. According to Ketcherside, baptism indicated the line where Christian fellowship began.⁴¹ Baptism expressed the faith of the individual

reaching out to appropriate the forgiveness that the good news about Jesus offered.⁴² In short, Ketcherside and Campbell identified baptism as the point where a person enters the church of God on earth.⁴³ With this position, Ketcherside called the Disciples from the practice of open membership because it allowed the individual to determine the terms of Christian fellowship. Ketcherside distinguished, however, between entrance into the Christian fellowship on earth and entrance into the eternal fellowship of heaven. He reasserted the position of Alexander Campbell, that while baptism provided a door into the church, it did not provide a door into heaven.⁴⁴ According to Ketcherside, receiving people into the fellowship of the one body on earth depended upon their submission to baptism, but he denied that the apostles ever proclaimed baptism as a condition of entrance into heaven.⁴⁵ Concerning the eternal destiny of believers who honestly saw no importance in baptism, Ketcherside refused to judge.⁴⁶ With this position Ketcherside called the Disciples away from the belief that involuntary ignorance invalidated baptism, requiring reimmersion every time an individual learned something new.

Avoiding both extreme positions that the Disciples had adopted on baptism, Ketcherside still had to confront the issue of the pious unimmersed. The Disciples disagreed among themselves over what to do about the unimmersed person who wanted admission to their fellowship. If they accepted unimmersed believers into their fellowship, then they weakened their restoration plea. If they rejected the unimmersed, then they weakened their unity plea. Ketcherside responded by suggesting

that while the divine will was perfect, the human understanding of that will was imperfect. Therefore, the mercy of God might accept the sincere intent of a person despite his imperfect obedience.⁴⁷ He advised that the Disciples should treat the unimmersed with magnanimity by accepting them as "brethren in prospect." Ketcherside reasoned from analogy, comparing the natural process of conception and birth to the spiritual process. Life begins, he argued, at conception. Birth delivers into the family the life that already exists in the womb. The spiritual process, he claimed, follows a similar course. When a person believes the good news about Jesus they receive new life; they are begotten by the Father. When they receive immersion they are born into the family, a change of their status. He concluded that all unimmersed believers were brethren in prospect, begotten of God but not yet born into the family. He exhorted the Disciples to treat them as spiritual embryos, and to nourish them with patience and love until the day of their birth, their baptismal day.⁴⁸ This policy stands midway between accepting the unimmersed into the fellowship and rejecting the unimmersed as being spiritually dead. The policy of Ketcherside encouraged the Disciples to receive and to work with all believers upon the basis of their agreements, and to make their disagreements matters for study.

The perspective Ketcherside gave to the baptism controversy pointed the Disciples back to the apostolic purpose, the unity of all believers. The real issue that the Disciples should address, Ketcherside claimed, was the lordship of Jesus, not baptism. By preaching baptism,

the Disciples had almost made it a moral issue. Ketcherside called baptism a positive ordinance, something you accept as right because you recognize the authority of the lawgiver.⁴⁹ The baptism issue would diminish, Ketcherside suggested, if the Disciples would proclaim the lordship of Jesus as the only uniting absolute, and would teach baptism as the initial response of a believer to His lordship.⁵⁰

The Disciples had lost the purpose of uniting all believers in one church. They developed a pattern concept of an institutionalized church; they crystallized around a particular brotherhood journal; they promoted their respective parties; and they imposed on others their understanding of the Bible. Ketcherside reformulated their beliefs and practices related to membership in the one church. He argued that only individuals trusting in Jesus, not groups conformed to a pattern, constituted the one church. He advocated strict adherence to congregational autonomy as a means of preventing party formations through journalistic oversight. He suggested that the Disciples cease their subjective approach to baptism, and quit making it optional or dependent upon doctrinal knowledge and conformity. Emphasize Jesus as Lord and teach baptism as the apostolic response to His lordship, Ketcherside urged, rather than emphasize baptism as the absolute for unity. These changes would restore the restoration ideal, Ketcherside believed, by recovering the unity purpose of the apostles.

Entrance Into the Fellowship.

Ketcherside reformulated the teaching of the conservative Disciples in regard to the nature of Christian fellowship. The concept of

fellowship that the Disciples had developed had divided the Movement into many parties, and it had destroyed their unity purpose. From the early history of the Movement to the present, some Disciples have considered the Bible as the foundation of Christian fellowship.⁵¹ This idea, coupled with the pattern concept of the Bible, and the view that the gospel of Jesus includes all the scriptures written by the apostles, made a united fellowship impossible among the Disciples. Whenever a disagreement arose between two Disciples often they separated into mutually hostile fellowships.⁵² Early in his ministry Ketcherside had practiced this divisiveness. He refused to recognize brotherhood between himself and other Disciples who differed from him on matters that he considered essential to fellowship.⁵³ Fellowship, according to the conservative Disciples, depended upon agreement and conformity to a biblical pattern of worship, discipline, and government for the church.⁵⁴ This thinking produced its logical consequence, a policy of division in order to maintain doctrinal purity.⁵⁵ Instead of working for unity they worked to create the pattern of essentials and to debate over what matters you could disagree with and still remain in the fellowship.⁵⁶ Every time a controversial issue arose it threatened the foundation of the fellowship as they conceived it, and this turned their unity movement into a dividing movement.

A nonsectarian concept of fellowship also existed among the Disciples from their earliest days. This concept held that membership in a religious group had no essential relationship to fellowship, but it taught that faith in Jesus as the Christ was the essential for

fellowship.⁵⁷ Ketcherside reaffirmed this nonsectarian concept of fellowship as part of his reformulated belief and practice on this subject.⁵⁸ He believed that the Disciples divided when they began to think of fellowship as a product of human thought. He, therefore, taught that God created the fellowship, not people.⁵⁹ Fellowship, according to Ketcherside, had nothing to do with agreement and conformity to a biblical pattern or to membership in a particular party. Fellowship resulted when people responded to the call of God through the proclamation of the gospel.⁶⁰ This concept of fellowship destroyed the rationale behind the divisions among the Disciples, as the following argument illustrates.

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| E: God creates the fellowship by calling people into it through the gospel of Christ. | | C: Therefore, all divisions among the Disciples have no justifiable basis. |
| | | |
| | W: Since divergent opinions among believers do not invali- date a divine creation. | |

Ketcherside equated fellowship with brotherhood. Since a common parenthood produces brotherhood, Ketcherside argued that those matters about which the Disciples had divided had no relation to fellowship.⁶¹ If the Father created the brotherhood, then disagreements among the brethren might strain their relationship, but disagreement could not destroy their common paternity. Ketcherside also defined fellowship as the sharing of a common life. Since that life came from the Father, not from the children, differences among the children could never destroy that life.⁶²

Ketcherside advocated a nonsectarian, nonhumanistic concept of Christian fellowship. He rejected the concept that fellowship depended

upon membership in a party, or agreement on doctrine, or conformity in practice. Ketcherside indicted these ideas as sources of division and confusion among the Disciples. God created the fellowship, he claimed, by calling people through the gospel, giving them a common life, and being their common parent. Fellowship, Ketcherside explained, existed despite disagreements, because agreement did not create the fellowship. Disagreements could not, therefore, dissolve fellowship.

Since Ketcherside argued that God called people into the state of fellowship through the gospel, he had to specify the terms of admission into that fellowship. He denied that any position on a doctrinal proposition, any deduction from scripture, or the approval from any religious party admitted a person into the fellowship.⁶⁵ He concluded that the terms of admission into the fellowship that would recover the apostolic purpose must make nothing a test of fellowship that God had not made a condition of salvation. He adopted this principle from Alexander Campbell who wrote that God admitted into the fellowship those who believed one fact (Jesus is the Christ) and who submitted to one institution expressive of that fact (immersion into water).⁶⁵ The invention of Ketcherside concerning the terms of entrance into the Christian fellowship simply repeated the position originally taken by the Campbells—belief in Jesus and obedience to Him in immersion admitted a person into the fellowship.⁶⁶

Recovering the unity purpose of the Disciples required abolishing the idea that doctrinal agreement produced and sustained the fellowship. Ketcherside argued, therefore, that predicating fellowship on agreement made it a human impossibility.⁶⁷

E: God and Christ are in fellowship with every sincere believer despite the fact that every believer is constantly learning, growing, and changing.

C: Therefore, sincere believers are in the fellowship with each other in spite of disagreements.

W: Since fellowship based upon agreement requires of humanity what is impossible even for Deity.

Ketcherside also argued that, from a practical viewpoint, the Disciples could not implement the concept of fellowship based on agreement. Even some conservative Disciples admitted that people could not achieve absolute agreement. They recognized that their position forced them to judge how much disagreement on what issues could exist without destroying the fellowship.⁶⁸ The fact that degrees of understanding must exist among Christians, Ketcherside claimed, made the fellowship by agreement idea totally impractical.⁶⁹

E: All people differ in perception, knowledge, and wisdom, making absolute agreement a human impossibility.

C: Therefore, fellowship based on human agreement can never exist.

W: Since we cannot determine in how many things we must agree, in how many things we may show leniency, nor do we have a way to decide into which of these two categories each issue belongs.

Some Disciples interpreted the invention of Ketcherside to say that disregarding error would produce fellowship.⁷⁰ His argument, he clarified, called the Disciples to stop disregarding their brethren because they held divergent opinions. He called for a return to the

founding purpose of the Movement, receiving each other as one in Christ in spite of differences.⁷¹ Because he believed human agreement on many issues was impossible, Ketcherside repeatedly opposed it as the basis for fellowship.⁷² The Disciples could heal their divisions by adopting a nonsectarian basis for fellowship, he suggested, by making a test of fellowship only what God had made an explicit condition of salvation.⁷³

The invention of Ketcherside actually reversed the thinking of the Disciples regarding agreement and fellowship. As already noted, he argued that God called people into the fellowship, and that upon belief in Jesus and obedience to Him in immersion every individual was begotten and born into the fellowship. Since birth into a family requires neither agreement in thought nor in action on the part of the children, Ketcherside concluded that fellowship preceded agreement. Agreement, rather than creating the fellowship, was a product of the fellowship. Agreement would grow, he believed, as those in the fellowship loved each other and received every person called by the gospel.⁷⁴ By reversing the fellowship-based-on-agreement idea, Ketcherside made the objective facts of the gospel the foundation of fellowship. He relegated the subjective interpretation of the apostolic doctrines to the area of growth and maturity within the fellowship. This view of fellowship and agreement removed the obsession for agreement that had divided the Disciples. It permitted them to recover their original unity purpose.

Because the conservative Disciples predicated fellowship upon agreement, they also developed the idea that endorsement of the beliefs

and practices of another person constituted fellowship. They, therefore, refused to recognize brotherhood with any person who believed or practiced that which they did not accept. This thinking splintered the Disciples into many parties, each claiming a conscience against something another person or group believed or practiced. Early in his ministry Ketcherside had equated fellowship with endorsing what another person believed and practiced. When he disapproved of the actions of another Disciple he avoided calling that person his brother, and recognized him only as a friend.⁷⁵ After his transformation experience, Ketcherside concluded that they had mistakenly equated fellowship with endorsement.⁷⁶ E. M. Zerr, a writer for Mission Messenger, disagreed with Ketcherside and affirmed that fellowship with others does mean endorsing their beliefs and practices. He argued that you cannot consistently reprove any group and still have fellowship with that group. Ketcherside responded with the argument that equating fellowship with endorsement, as Zerr did, failed to harmonize with the writings of the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth.⁷⁷

E: Paul said that the Corinthians had been called into the fellowship. Paul repeatedly called them brethren. Paul called them beloved children. His entire letter is a letter of stern reproof.

C: Therefore, fellowship and endorsement are not the same thing.

W: Since Paul did not endorse many things about the Corinthian church, but he recognized them as being in the fellowship.

Ketcherside also argued that the words "fellowship" and "endorsement" had different meanings and should not be equated.⁷⁸

E: Fellowship is sharing a common life into which God calls us. Endorsement is an act of human will to approve or to disapprove the opinions or the acts of another.

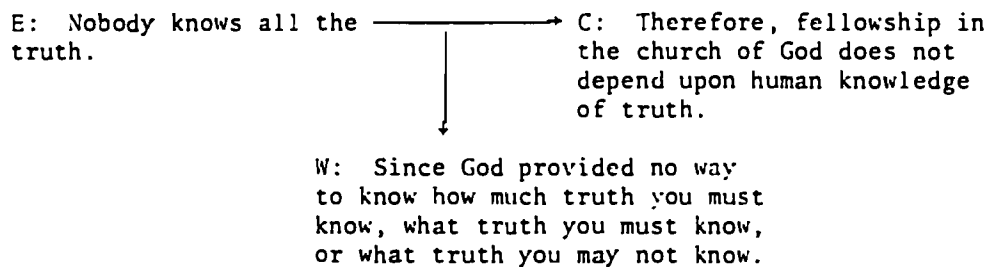
C: Therefore, fellowship is one thing: endorsement is a different thing.

W: Since fellowship and endorsement have different meanings.

By putting fellowship and endorsement into this perspective, Ketcherside removed a source of divisiveness from among the Disciples. Fellowship, rather than being a bond created by personal approval of another person, is a state God created. People enter that state by faith and in spite of their differences.

Fellowship, when premised upon agreement and endorsement of a pattern of church worship, discipline, and government, requires knowledge of that pattern as a requirement to enter and to remain in that fellowship. Therefore, in contrast to the Declaration and Address, the conservative Disciples insisted that fellowship only existed among those who possessed a certain quantity of knowledge concerning selected biblical statements and biblical silences.⁷⁹ This position failed to consider, however, that people learn different things; they learn at different rates; and they learn with different perspectives. Their fellowship-based-on-knowledge premise failed, therefore, to produce and to sustain fellowship. To the contrary, it contributed to the decay of the Movement. Ketcherside recognized that insisting upon intellectual conformity to a pattern as the basis of fellowship had created only confusion and strife.⁸⁰ He attacked the idea that

fellowship existed because people simultaneously gained the same knowledge on biblical doctrines. He argued, first of all, that this standard of fellowship made divine-human fellowship impossible. If fellowship resulted from an equality in understanding between two personalities, he reasoned, then mankind had no opportunity for fellowship with God. Human understanding could never approach divine understanding.⁸¹ His major argument, however, against predicating fellowship on knowledge of biblical doctrines exposed the subjective nature of that position.⁸²



This argument leads to the conclusion that, without an objective standard of judgment, a person uses his own knowledge to judge who is in and who is out of the fellowship.⁸³ Ketcherside ridiculed the subjectiveness of this position. It allowed a fallible person to set aside another fallible person merely because the latter made mistakes, as did the former, but made them about different things. In such a system, he quipped, loyalty is making mistakes and being ignorant about the same things.⁸⁴

Ketcherside rejected the concept that fellowship depended upon knowledge of doctrine. This position made divine-human fellowship impossible, and it premised fellowship on a subjective basis that divided

people. He urged the Disciples to recognize that God calls people into the fellowship by the facts of the gospel only. To express his position on fellowship, its relation to faith in Jesus and knowledge of doctrine, Ketcherside coined the slogan: one can be wrong about many things if he is right about Jesus and still be saved; he can be right about everything else but if he is wrong about Jesus he will still be lost.⁸⁵

In essence, Ketcherside argued that God alone creates the fellowship by calling people into it by the gospel. They enter the fellowship by faith in and obedience to Jesus, irrespective of human agreement, endorsement, or knowledge. He concluded, therefore, that only God, and never an individual or a group, could exclude a person from the fellowship. Ketcherside distinguished, however, between fellowship and congregational association. While human attitudes and actions could not create the fellowship, they could, he conceded, create or sever associations within a local congregation.⁸⁶ In his opinion, three reasons existed for excluding a person from congregational association: advocating doctrines that denied the facts of the gospel, moral turpitude, and a factional spirit destroying the unity of the body of Christ.⁸⁷ Each of these behaviors, Ketcherside believed, constituted justifiable grounds for disassociation because each destroyed the basis of fellowship, the lordship of Jesus over the mind and the body of the individual.

Ketcherside presented two lists of generalizations that summarize his invention on fellowship. After restudying the first letter of the Apostle Paul to the church at Corinth, Ketcherside reached seven

negatively phrased conclusions about fellowship. In brief, they constitute his answers to the inconsistent and contradictory thinking of the Disciples on this subject. In order to recover the apostolic purpose of unity, he presented the following statements for the Disciples to consider.⁸⁸

1. Brotherhood is not conditioned upon freedom from division.
2. Brotherhood is not based upon maturity in Christian growth.
3. Brotherhood is not based on a correct attitude toward one another.
4. Brotherhood is not conditioned upon uniformity of knowledge.
5. Brotherhood is not based on perfection of worship.
6. Brotherhood is not conditioned on perfection in order.
7. Brotherhood is not conditioned upon a degree of understanding.

He presented another list containing seven principles of fellowship that he called "trail blazes." He used these seven to reevaluate the disorder among the Disciples on the subject of fellowship. As listed below, these principles summarize how the Disciples can, in the opinion of Ketcherside, recover the apostolic purpose in relation to Christian fellowship.⁸⁹

1. Agreement is not essential to, nor a prerequisite to fellowship, but fellowship creates the proper atmosphere in which we labor toward agreement.
2. The conscience and personal convictions of each individual must be respected and protected by those who hold a divergent view, and no violation thereof must be expected or commanded.

3. The minority of things upon which we disagree must not be allowed to nullify or negate the great majority of things upon which we agree, but the latter must constitute the foundation for a restudy of the former.
4. In those areas of our country where formal division has occurred, and been sanctified and rooted by tradition, we should not allow the fraternal spirit to be crushed out of our hearts, but should maintain contact and cultivate mutual association.
5. We should cease to regard division among children of God as a constructive instrument to secure purity of doctrine, and should look upon it as a destructive weapon, thrust into our hands by Satan, who infiltrates the heart.
6. We must recognize that so long as schism exists in the body no segment, splinter, or faction is the loyal church.
7. Since only peacemakers are truly called the sons of God, we must resolve never to contribute to another division in the ranks of God's family, and to labor unceasingly to abolish those cleavages which have resulted from past attitudes.

Maintaining the Unity of Christ

The Disciples of Christ began when their founders concluded that the Christian faith demanded unity among all believers in Jesus. Their founding documents expressed the conviction, as Daniel Sommer phrased it, that the business of the Disciples is to lay aside differences, become united, and show others how to unite.⁹⁰ The present study has demonstrated, however, that the Disciples failed in their unity drive, and that they divided among themselves. In response to this failure, Ketcherside reasserted the absolute essentiality of Christian unity. In his scheme of invention the overriding consideration for any religious belief or practice was its ability to destroy factionalism

and to promote unity among all sincere believers in Jesus. According to Ketcherside, God has one grand purpose on earth: gathering every individual together in Christ.⁹¹ He emphasized unity, however, not as the end of Christian faith, but as the means to bring all people to acknowledge the sovereignty of Jesus.⁹² In the thought of Ketcherside, unity never supplied merely a topic for sermonizing. Unity stood as a divine prerequisite for world conquest, a prerequisite with which he personally identified.⁹³

Ketcherside, therefore, consistently opposed religious division due to his belief in the essentiality of unity. He agreed with Thomas Campbell who wrote that division among Christians is a horrid evil.⁹⁴ After he restudied the history, beliefs, and practices of the Disciples, he concluded that they suffered from division as much as any religious group. As a divided people, the Disciples could not achieve the apostolic purpose. They had divided into rival factions, each identified by a journal or a school, and each proclaimed partisan conformity as its plan for unity.⁹⁵ Ketcherside refused to accept this situation as the norm. He called it unchristian, sectarian, and sinful.⁹⁶ He argued simply that since the Bible always condemned division and urged unity among Christians, the divided Disciples had sinned.⁹⁷

E: Not once does the Bible counsel division among believers, but it frequently urges unity.

C: Therefore, division among the Disciples of Christ is sinful.

W: Since behavior violating the will of God is sinful.

Expanding upon this general argument, Ketcherside listed seven reasons why he considered religious division a sin. (1) It thwarts the divine purpose. (2) It deters the function of the Holy Spirit. (3) It is both cause and symptom of immaturity and carnality. (4) It develops an appetite for spiritual cannibalism. (5) It perverts the proper use of the Bible. (6) It creates a false sense of values. (7) It arrogantly disregards the unity purpose of the Movement.⁹⁸

By itself, the argument opposing division because it was sinful would have little impact upon the Disciples. They always claimed to have believed this. Each faction among them simply placed the blame for their divisions upon their rival factions. Ketcherside added another argument, however, that struck at the heart of their divisions, and forced them to face their problem. By describing their divided condition and noting the fact that each division claimed to be the "loyal" church, he emphasized the inconsistency and contradictions of their religious system.⁹⁹

E: We have some twenty-five groups of Disciples, each claiming to be the loyal church, and each denying the legitimacy of the other groups.

C: Therefore, the Disciples present a ludicrous picture and a tragic rape of the Restoration Movement.

W: Since their beliefs and practices are inconsistent and contradictory.

Given this situation throughout the Movement, Ketcherside argued that not one of the factions had a right to exist because they all contradicted the founding purpose of the Movement.¹⁰⁰

E: The Disciples forgot their original unity purpose, and crystallized into factions and parties.

C: Therefore, they have forfeited their right to exist.

W: Since any group that denies by its behavior its professed purpose has no right to exist.

In the judgment of Ketcherside, the Disciples had abandoned the apostolic purpose and had behaved absurdly. They claimed loyalty to Jesus, the living Word, who came to unite people, while they used the Bible, the written word, to divide people.¹⁰¹ As long as the Disciples remained a divided people, Ketcherside claimed they would be a people without a justifiable purpose, a people out of tune with the intellectual climate of their generation, a people victimized by their own parochial philosophy, a people burdened with unwritten creeds, and a people claiming to speak where the Bible speaks, but speaking as their party speaks.¹⁰² He said they made their unity plea a burlesque, a laughing-stock, and a travesty by dividing over the following matters: missionary societies, instrumental music, centralized control, colleges, orphans homes, the right to own a television set, the right to air national radio and television programs, leavened or unleavened bread for communion, the manner of breaking the bread, fermented or unfermented juice for communion, one cup or individual cups to serve the juice, Bible classes, uninspired literature, evangelists, hired ministers, the pastor system, the marriage of divorced persons, speaking with tongues, foot washing, divine healing, the hour for church meetings, and Ketcherside added in jest, "as they say in the sign bills, a host

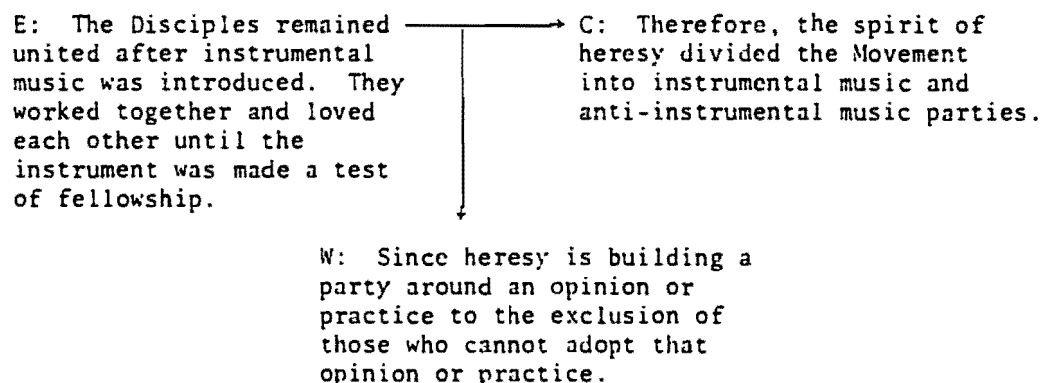
of other things too numerous to mention."¹⁰³ The Disciples, therefore, suffered from the problem of division, and they needed to recover the apostolic purpose, unifying people in Christ.

Ketcherside devoted much of his invention to identifying and describing why the Disciples divided. Although the Disciples accused each other for their divisions by charging that their rival factions disregarded the authority of the Bible, Ketcherside denied that this was the cause.¹⁰⁴ While admitting that the causes were complex, Ketcherside identified several forces that he claimed had fragmented the Movement. He listed as divisive factors, attitudes of clerical jealousy, selfishness, and ambition plus a sectarian fear that formulated creeds, built walls, and measured current thought by knowledge crystallized in the past.¹⁰⁵ Rather than things like instrumental music dividing the Movement, Ketcherside pointed to the attitudes the Disciples associated with such things as a cause of their problem. One party considered a piano in a church meeting as a sign of religious freedom. Another party considered the same piano as evidence of religious corruption. Because neither group would compromise they divided, but not over the piano as they insisted. They divided, Ketcherside claimed, because they developed sectarian attitudes.¹⁰⁶ They divided when they emphasized a specific issue to the point that they emotionally identified with that issue as the truth of God. As such, they insisted that others think as they thought about the issue or suffer excommunication. This attitude toward truth, and not the many things about which they differed, divided the Movement.¹⁰⁷

Ketcherside also suggested that a feeling of insecurity contributed to their divisive attitudes. An attitude of fear toward God and fear concerning their relationship to Him developed among the Disciples. Because some of them had tried to justify themselves with legalistic conformity, they suffered from fear, fear of their imperfect obedience. This fear, according to Ketcherside, kept them from loving each other, and it drove them into division.¹⁰⁸ Ketcherside attributed their fears, in turn, to their immature and carnal natures. Immaturity and carnality kept them from exercising the principle of love, and caused them to regress to religious legalism. They fought among themselves as spoiled children do, divided into antagonistic parties, and lost sight of the apostolic purpose.¹⁰⁹

Ketcherside believed that their inability to love one another had divided them far more than even their presuppositions about how to interpret the silences of the Bible. As noted previously, some Disciples claimed that biblical silence on a practice forbade the practice. Others claimed that silence permitted freedom of choice. Those who adopted, respectively, these two presuppositions arrived at opposite conclusions on many issues. These differences strained the unity of the Movement, but Ketcherside asserted that these differences did not destroy that unity. The Disciples divided, in the opinion of Ketcherside, when they ceased to love each other as much as they loved their interpretations.¹¹⁰ The invention of Ketcherside removed the cause of division almost totally out of the realm of biblical doctrine and interpretation. He blamed unbrotherly attitudes held by the Disciples as a primary cause for the loss of their unity purpose.

Ketcherside identified the spirit of heresy as another major reason that the Disciples had divided. He developed this argument mainly by defining the Greek word from which we derive the English word "heresy." He believed that misunderstanding the term "heresy" perpetuated disunity among the Disciples. In opposition to the concept of heresy commonly held by the Disciples, Ketcherside argued that heresy had nothing to do with opinions and practices, their truthfulness or falseness. Heresy referred to nothing a person could teach. Heresy, he explained, referred to the motive and the attitude of the person who taught a belief or a practice. Heresy signifies the party spirit that builds a faction around an opinion for the purpose of segregating people.¹¹¹ Using the issue of instrumental music as an example, he argued as follows.¹¹²



By claiming that heresy caused their divisions he transcended the mutually antagonistic claims that corrupt practices and disrespect for the Bible had divided the Movement. He identified the manifestation of the factious spirit as a cause of their fragmentation. Not the truth or error of a belief or a practice, but the manner by which a

person regarded another person became the focus of his invention on the causes of division.

He also identified a philosophy toward brotherhood that the Disciples had adopted as a major factor disintegrating the Movement. He claimed that this philosophy, which he called "basic Church-of-Christism," had destroyed unity among the Disciples.¹¹³ According to Ketcherside, Daniel Sommer publicly stated this philosophy in the "Sand Creek Address and Declaration" of 1889. In opposition to missionary societies, church choirs, church festivals for fund raising, and the one-man, preacher-pastor system, Sommer declared the following.¹¹⁴

And now, in closing up this address and declaration, we state that we are impelled from a sense of duty to say, that all such as are guilty of teaching, or allowing and practicing the many innovations and corruptions to which we have referred, that after being admonished and having had sufficient time for reflection, if they do not turn away from such abominations, that we cannot and will not regard them as brethren.¹¹⁵

The philosophy of brotherhood implied in this statement, according to Ketcherside, predicated brotherhood on conformity to correct beliefs and practices. It sanctioned division among believers in Jesus in order to maintain purity of belief and practice. No single cause for losing their unity purpose and for dividing themselves does Ketcherside mention more frequently than he mentions the philosophy of maintaining purity in the congregation by separating from brethren.¹¹⁶

Despite the fact that the Disciples originated in a movement to restore apostolic unity, they lost that purpose. The essentiality of unity gave way to widespread division among the Disciples. Their

thinking and practices became inconsistent and contradictory. The Movement to unite the Christians in all the sects splintered into more than twenty groups, each sanctioning its separate status. Among the causes for these divisions, Ketcherside identified the following: clerical jealousy, sectarian fear, a sectarian attitude toward truth, spiritual insecurity resulting from immaturity and carnality, mutual lovelessness, a spirit of heresy, and the philosophy of maintaining purity by separation from erring brethren.

After reasserting the essentiality of unity, describing the problem of division among the Disciples, and identifying several causes for their divisions, Ketcherside suggested several solutions to recover their lost unity. A major theme of Disciple thought since their inception has been to prescribe for religious division. As noted earlier, Thomas Campbell believed that returning to the explicit terms of the constitution of the church (the Bible) would unify all believers.¹¹⁷ Alexander Campbell taught, on one hand, unity based on the gospel facts alone, and on the other hand, unity based on "the Bible, the whole Bible, and nothing but the Bible."¹¹⁸ As previously discussed, these statements opened the door for equating the gospel facts with the entire Bible, and this thwarted their unity purpose. Benjamin Franklin suggested that unity would result when all people adopted one system, which he identified as the Bible, or "the Gospel, the whole Gospel, and nothing but the Gospel."¹¹⁹ Issac Errett, James Mathes, and Daniel Sommer prescribed the same solution for religious division: accept only what the Bible teaches.¹²⁰ Even the "Rough

Draft," which the youthful Ketcherside and his party attacked for its assumed liberal approach to unity, merely proposed their traditional solution of searching out and agreeing upon things from the Bible.¹²¹ The invention of the conservative Disciples consistently asserted that going to the Bible and accepting its explicit teachings would unite the Christians in all the sects.¹²² As we have seen already, not only did this proposed solution fail to unite the Christians in the existing sects, it sectarianized the Restoration Movement itself.

Ketcherside argued that recovering the unity purpose of the Movement was a matter to be solved by each congregation rather than by national conventions.¹²³ To this end he dedicated his monthly journal, Mission Messenger.¹²⁴ The approach to unity adopted by Ketcherside affirmed the inspired authority of the Bible, but Ketcherside never proposed that people should just go to the Bible, believe and obey its explicit teachings in order to maintain unity. He recognized, as the conservative Disciples apparently did not, that the divine authority of the Bible did not transfer to the human interpretation of the Bible. Part of his solution, therefore, suggested that the Disciples view their rules of biblical interpretation in a different light. Since rules for biblical interpretation did not come from the Bible, but they came from human reasoning, Ketcherside argued that the Disciples should consider such rules as human opinions and, therefore, they could never provide justifiable grounds for division.¹²⁵

E: Human opinion, not the Bible, formulated the rules of Bible interpretation that say: whatever the Bible does not mention is forbidden and whatever the Bible does not mention may be allowable.

C: Therefore, these rules should never provide reasons for division among Christians.

W: Since the Bible forbids division over human opinions.

This argument fits his audience well. The Disciples claimed to respect whatever the Bible teaches, and their tradition always has condemned dividing over a human opinion. This argument also illustrates how their divergent rules of biblical interpretation led them to contradict one of their founding principles. Consistent with the position that rules of biblical interpretation are human opinions rather than divine absolutes, Ketcherside exhorted the Disciples to consider their biblical inferences as their private property only. He supported the right of private judgment by urging the Disciples to stop acting like infallible interpreters. If they would stop forcing their conclusions on others with an "either-or" absoluteness, he suggested, then they would recover their unity.¹²⁶

Ketcherside also advised the opposite to the philosophy of division to maintain doctrinal purity. In his opinion, this philosophy produced many imperfect churches from an original imperfect church. While the conservative Disciples argued that they should divide because they disagreed, Ketcherside argued that they should unite in order to agree.¹²⁷ He recommended that everybody remain with his original congregation. When they learn a new truth they should share it with

the congregation, not as the revelation of God but as personal understanding of His revelation. But never should they separate and build a new party around the truth.¹²⁸ This solution answered the heresy force behind their divisions. Ketcherside believed that the spirit of heresy could not create another division if the Disciples would regard nothing as a test of fellowship except believing the fact that Jesus is the Christ and obeying the act of immersion into Christ.¹²⁹ In short, true brotherhood and ecumenicity exist only in submission to Christ, and Ketcherside exhorted the Disciples to recover the apostolic purpose through loyalty to the person of Jesus.¹³⁰

At the end of his articles, "Thoughts on Fellowship," in 1958, Ketcherside listed nine solutions for the recovery of the unity lost by the Disciples. These solutions, listed below, summarize the thinking of Ketcherside on this matter.

1. Regard the division of believers as displeasing to God.
2. Refuse to accept such division as normal.
3. Imitate Jesus by praying for unity.
4. Make nothing a test of fellowship that God has not made a condition of salvation.
5. Go anywhere, any time, to consult with anyone about how to eliminate schisms.
6. Deal courteously and kindly with all who differ.
7. Love all men.
8. Work and write for scriptural unity.
9. Always believe that conditions can be changed.¹³¹

Ordained to the Ministry of Christ

Those Disciples with whom the youthful Ketcherside identified distinguished themselves as the "mutual ministry" or "anti-one-man pastor system" Churches of Christ. They followed the editorial leadership of the Apostolic Review, edited and published by Daniel Sommer. Their detractors within the Movement referred to them as "Sommerites." They believed, as did more moderate Disciples, in the priesthood of all believers.¹³² The conservative Disciples contended, however, that adopting a professional clergy system and relegating the church membership to a passive, submissive laity violated the purpose of the Movement and the teaching of the Bible. On this position, Ketcherside has remained unchanged throughout the years. To him, adopting a professional clergy system indicated a weakening of faith in the local congregation, a denial of their heritage as priests of God, and a sectarian desire to conform to a popular image of the church.¹³³ Ketcherside identified two aspects of hiring a professional clergyman to serve a congregation that, in his opinion, made this practice contrary to the apostolic purpose. First, he claimed that replacing a mutual ministry system with a one-man ministry system developed a clergy caste, exercising arrogant, intolerant persecution tactics that rendered the church subservient.¹³⁴ Second, he contended that the one-man pastor system violated the apostolic purpose because the scriptures taught that all believers constituted the priesthood, not just a few who had graduated from a seminary.¹³⁵

At least three factors, according to Ketcherside, promoted the professional clergy among the Disciples. A desire for prestige on the

part of a few ambitious men combined with a refusal by the church members to accept spiritual responsibility led some congregations to hire a professional minister.¹³⁶ Incompetent leadership at the local level, a second factor, encouraged others to depend upon a professional clergy.¹³⁷ The most significant factor that led to the adoption of the hired minister system, in the opinion of Ketcherside, was a misconception of the church. As previously noted, Ketcherside taught that only individuals related through a personal submission to Christ constituted the church. Ketcherside claimed that, in contrast to this concept, the Disciples had adopted the more popularly held idea of the church as an organization. Organizations exist to promote themselves and their goals through programs directed by trained executives. Once they adopted this image of the church, Ketcherside opined, the adoption of the professional clergy system followed naturally. This caused the Disciples to lose their unity and restoration purposes.¹³⁸

As alternatives to the clergy system that Ketcherside claimed had changed a dynamic movement into static parties, he offered several solutions. He urged the Disciples to broaden their definition of ministry. The Disciples thought of and spoke in terms of the person who delivered a sermon on Sunday morning as the "minister." As noted earlier, this concept gave ordinary men extraordinary power, and some used that power to divide the Movement. The ministry includes every baptized member of the body of Christ, Ketcherside claimed. He exhorted the Disciples to stop talking about a person "entering the ministry" when he began preaching as a profession. He suggested that they think

of ministry as service. As such, all laity are clergy and all clergy are laity, including women.¹³⁹ Ketcherside also encouraged the Disciples to consider ministry as all the functions of every member that benefited others. Defining ministry as preaching a sermon from a pulpit, in the opinion of Ketcherside, used a universal term in a parochial sense.¹⁴⁰ The ministry to recover the apostolic purpose involves all baptized believers in Jesus. It includes their acts of daily living. Equal ministerial responsibility and equal ministerial authority, recognized and respected for all Disciples would, recover their dynamic purpose. It would also deter clerical influence from dividing them.

Ketcherside suggested two steps for the Disciples to take in order to implement his concept of a universal ministry. First, they had to restore a biblical eldership. Ketcherside envisioned each church as autonomous, but guided by several elders. Each respective congregation would choose elders on the basis of their Christian maturity and leadership abilities.¹⁴¹ This would invest all decision-making power in the local eldership and ultimately in the total local membership. Second, the eldership had to transform the total church program into a training and educational experience. Christian assemblies should develop every member to his highest potential because the ministry included all believers.¹⁴² Ketcherside suggested that church meetings should equip every member to perform effectively some ministry. He designed his proposed solutions to change the current status of the Movement in two ways. His suggestions would remove from preachers and editors their clerical power and diffuse that power

throughout the entire membership of each autonomous congregation. The nature of church meetings would also change. Rather than resemble holding operations to preserve and to protect a pattern devised by a party, church meetings would train Christians to penetrate into the greater society and transform it by rendering service.

Living the Worship of Christ

Thomas Campbell bequeathed to the Disciples a way of thinking about worship. He taught that the New Testament is a perfect constitution for the worship of the church, and that in observing divine ordinances we should follow the primitive church without deviation.¹⁴³ Conservative Disciples, therefore, have scrutinized the Christian Bible to distill from it the pattern of worship supposedly interspersed on its pages. Not only have they attempted to produce a pattern of worship from commands, examples, and necessary inferences drawn from the Bible, they have also attempted to exclude from that pattern all practices upon which they found only biblical silence. Their history suggests that the adoption of this hermeneutical task created difficulty for them at best, and it divided them at worst. The Disciples never mutually agreed as to which commands and examples applied to the post-apostolic era and which applied only during the time of the apostles. They disagreed even more over what inferences drawn from scripture were necessary and which were just plain erroneous. They disagreed even further about the observance of biblical silences. While one Disciple concluded that biblical silence condemned a certain practice, another

Disciple understood that same silence as a matter of opinion that permitted liberty of choice.¹⁴⁴ They thought of worship as discrete, specific acts, prescribed by biblical commands, examples, and necessary inferences, and performed inside a church building. Some even claimed that teaching, praying, giving, singing, and communing constituted the only authorized pattern of worship.¹⁴⁵ This approach to worship led to inconsistencies and contradictions among the Disciples and, in turn, to a loss of their unity purpose. Rather than work for the unity of all believers in Christ, they debated themselves into division. They disagreed over such issues as the scripturalness of singing with a piano, communing with multiple cups, or teaching the Bible in Sunday School classes rather than in one group. Every position taken on any issue provided an opportunity to form another splinter group, and they justified their divisions by claiming that the others had corrupted the divine pattern of worship.

The first change Ketcherside made in relation to the pattern concept of worship was attitudinal. While he held to the idea of a primitive pattern of worship for several years after his transformation experience, he, nevertheless, refused to divide with a brother who held a pattern divergent from his.¹⁴⁶ After further study, he concluded that the Bible contained no pattern of worship, and he argued, as follows, that the entire concept came from Church of Christ traditionalism.¹⁴⁷

E: The Bible never mentions acts of worship, the worship, nor does it refer to the five acts done in our church assemblies as worship. Most of our brethren believe that the Bible lays down a specific, unvarying pattern of worship.

C: Therefore, the idea of a pattern of worship consisting of five acts is merely Church of Christ traditionalism.

W: Since the concept had to
originate with the source
that teaches it.

The pattern approach to worship that the conservative Disciples had adopted resembled, in the opinion of Ketcherside, the temple system of Jewish worship. He accused them, therefore, of living B. C. lives in an A. D. world.¹⁴⁸

Ketcherside formulated an evolutionary concept of worship to supplant the pattern concept. He based his idea on the premise that God required worship only in accord with the level of spiritual understanding achieved by His chosen people. Since that understanding has evolved for thousands of years, he claimed that the human worship of God has evolved with that understanding. He used the following examples from the Hebrew and Christian Bibles to support his premise. When the chosen people of God roamed the earth as a nomadic tribe they worshipped Him by building altars of earth. Then God allowed them to build altars of field stone, with the prohibition that they carve no images on the face of the stones. When His people became a nation God gave them meticulous details for building a portable tabernacle. After the conquest of Israel and their affluent growth as the Kingdom of Israel, God permitted King Solomon to build a temple in Jerusalem. The Jews worshipped, hereafter, at this temple. They instituted special days of worship, revered the temple as the house of worship, ordained a special priesthood to conduct the worship, and developed an elaborate liturgy and pageantry. These four forms of expressing worship, Ketcherside explained, matched the evolving monotheism and

moral standards of the Hebrews. From a nomadic tribe, given to idolatry and lacking a civilizing morality, to an affluent nation, founded on monotheism and the morality of the Ten Commandments of Moses, God required only worship commensurate to their spiritual evolution.

An altar of earth, an altar of uncut field stone, a portable tabernacle, a temple, and then Jesus made his advent. Ketcherside argued that the childhood of the people of God ended with the birth, life, death, and resurrection of Jesus. Arguing primarily from the story of Jesus talking to the Samaritan woman, Ketcherside concluded that Jesus came to abolish religion as an approach to God and to give a whole new concept of worship. The scripture records Jesus as saying that the hour had arrived when men would not worship God in the temple at Jerusalem, but they would worship God in spirit and in truth. Ketcherside claimed that God required this type of worship today as the highest evolutionary expression of worship. Worship in spirit and truth, according to Ketcherside, meant that man no longer would go to a temple; he was the temple. No special priesthood would conduct worship because all believers were priests.¹⁴⁹

Ketcherside drew several conclusions from his evolutionary concept of worship that provided alternatives to the divisive pattern concept. He distinguished between worship, which he said must always be internal, and religion, which must always be external.¹⁵⁰ Worship, in its highest evolved state, is the response of the human heart to the goodness of God twenty-four hours a day, seven days a week. People worship when they bow down their inner spirit with a sense of dependency before

God.¹⁵¹ Since Jesus abolished religion and He became the living Way to God, Ketcherside argued, the highest form of religion and the only significant religion was sharing life with the unfortunate. Sharing life and love with orphans and widows and avoiding immorality and unethical living constitute religion when people worship God in spirit and in truth.¹⁵²

This concept of worship and religion recognized no holy place to perform worship since it recognized no unholy place. A religion of sharing life and a worship of total and continuous response to the love of God cannot fit into any discrete location. Ketcherside asserted that the sanctuary of God on earth today is the consecrated human heart.¹⁵³ Likewise, no discrete acts can constitute worship according to this concept. No prescribed forms expressed in commands, examples, and necessary inferences can encompass all of life as a response to God. The invention of Ketcherside rejected the sacred-secular dichotomy when referring to the lives of believers in Jesus. He suggested that the worship of God in spirit knows no such categories.¹⁵⁴ It makes no difference, therefore, if people sing with a piano, if they sing a capella, if they sing in a church building, if they sing at home, if they sing in the street, or if they sing at all. Whatever believers do, if done in grateful response to divine goodness, that is the worship required in its highest state of development.

Summary

Ketcherside made the recovery of the unity purpose of the apostles a major theme of his invention. His personal transformation experience

in 1951 and his subsequent research produced a reformulation of those beliefs and practices upon which the Disciples manifested inconsistencies and contradictions. Ketcherside argued that the Disciples could renew the restoration ideal and recover their unity purpose by changing in five areas of belief and practice.

They had developed a concept of the church as an institution consisting of congregations all conformed to a meticulous pattern of worship, discipline, and government. They had become subservient to journalistic dictates, and they had become subjective concerning the terms of admission into the church. The invention of Ketcherside suggested that only individuals who believe and obey Jesus constitute the church, that congregational autonomy only could recover unity, and that the apostolic requirements for entrance into the church included only belief in and immersion into Jesus.

The Disciples defined fellowship as knowledge, agreement, and conformity to a pattern of church worship, discipline, and government. They equated fellowship with endorsement. Ketcherside responded by defining fellowship as a state into which God calls people through the gospel. Fellowship did not depend upon intellectual agreement or mutual approval but it depended upon only what would recover unity—belief in and immersion into Jesus.

The Disciples lost their unity purpose, and they blamed their divisions on each other. They charged each other with disrespecting the Bible and teaching heresy. They concluded that they had to separate from each other to maintain their doctrinal purity. Ketcherside

reasserted the essentiality of unity, and he reminded the Disciples of the sin of division. He identified their attitudes toward each other and toward truth, and their spirit of heresy as major reasons why they divided. He reversed their philosophy of division by suggesting that they unite in order to work toward agreement. Rather than telling them to go to the Bible, he reminded them that their interpretations of the Bible and the Bible should not be equated. He pointed to love as the only absolute for holding free people together.

The Disciples developed a clerical class to promote their party interests. Their clergy, in turn, assumed clerical power that reinforced their divisive tendencies. Ketcherside argued for congregational autonomy and the practice of mutual ministry of the total membership to recover their lost unity.

A pattern concept of worship attracted many Disciples, and they imposed on each other their pattern as terms of brotherhood. Differences as to what the pattern included and excluded divided the Disciples into many groups. Ketcherside denied that any pattern existed except in the imagination of the Disciples. He presented a concept of worship that included every act and every place where believers in Jesus existed. Only a nonlegalistic, all-encompassing concept of worship, he suggested, could recover their unity purpose.

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¹⁶ W. Carl Ketcherside, "What Is Christendom?," MM, 34 (1972), 54.

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¹¹⁸ Alexander Campbell, "Millennium—No. II," Millennial Harbinger 1 (1830), 145; The Christian System, p. 84.

¹¹⁹ Benjamin Franklin, "Union of Christians," in The Gospel Preacher, 14th ed. (Cincinnati: G. W. Rice, 1879), I, pp. 320, 321; "Our Position As A Religious Community," in Biographical Sketch and Writings of Elder Benjamin Franklin (Indianapolis: Daniel Sommer Publisher, 1906), p. 144.

¹²⁰ Errett, "Our Position," in Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union, pp. 304, 324, 325; Mathes, The Western Preacher, p. 146; Sommer, Plain Sermons, pp. 314-320.

¹²¹ "Can't We Agree on Something?," Editorial, Apostolic Review, 76, No. 6 (1932), 1, 2.

¹²² Welshimer, Concerning the Disciples, pp. 114, 119; Ford, A History of the Restoration Plea, p. 139; Arthur Atkinson, Jr., "Fellowship," in Thoughts on Unity, pp. 48, 50; "Blind in One Eye," Editorial, Firm Foundation, 79 (1962), 210; Thomas Whitfield, "The Basis

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¹²³ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Instrumental Music," MM, 20, No. 5 (1958), 4; "Unity in Christ," MM, 28 (1966), 68.

¹²⁴ Ketcherside, "Facing the Future," p. 11.

¹²⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Approach to Authority," MM, 28 (1966), 116-122.

¹²⁶ Ketcherside, "Unity in Diversity," pp. 8-10; "Facing the Issues," MM, 32 (1970), 4, 11; "Hail and Farewell," MM, 37 (1975), 189.

¹²⁷ Rader, "Unity and Tullahoma, Tennessee (II)," p. 11; W. Carl Ketcherside, "Incendiary Instruments," MM, 24, No. 1 (1962), 9-11; "Reply to Brother Thomas," p. 55.

¹²⁸ Ketcherside, "Queries to the Editor," pp. 166, 167; The Spirit of God, recorded May 1969, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

¹²⁹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Queries to the Editor (No. 2)," MM, 23, No. 4 (1961), 7.

¹³⁰ Ketcherside, "Incendiary Instruments," p. 11; How Nondenominational, How Interdenominational, How Anti-denominational.

¹³¹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Prayer of Jesus," MM, 20, No. 12 (1958), 13.

¹³² Errett, "Our Position," in Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union, p. 312.

¹³³ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Drift of Time," MM, 17, No. 9 (1955), 1, 2; "What? No Pulpits?," MM, 8, No. 9 (1947), 1; "Mutual Ministry," MM, 11, No. 2 (1949), 7; "Pride and Destruction," MM, 11, No. 5 (1949), 8; "Straws in the Wind," MM, 12, No. 1 (1950), 11.

¹³⁴ W. Carl Ketcherside, "'Radiant Truth' Reviewed," MM, 11, No. 7 (1949), 4, 5; "Another Debate With Wallace," MM, 15, No. 3 (1953), 8.

¹³⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Sectarian One-Man Ministry," MM, 11, No. 4 (1949), 1, 2; "The Clerical Spirit," MM, 11, No. 7 (1949), 8; "Contending for the Faith," MM, 12, No. 5 (1950), 7; "The Clergy and the Church," MM, 19, No. 4 (1957), 5; Ministering to A Great Church, recorded July 1972, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Equipping the Saints," MM, 36 (1974), 163.

136 W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Hireling Ministry," MM, 12, No. 12 (1950), 4, 5.

137 Ketcherside, Preachers' Forum.

138 W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Clergy of God," MM, 29 (1967), 146-148; Preachers' Forum; Ministry Is for Everyone, recorded August 1974, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

139 W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Clergy System," MM, 36 (1974), 18; "Transforming Speech," MM, 36 (1974), 35-38; Ministry Is for Everyone; The Covenant.

140 Ketcherside, "The Church Speaks of Discovering and Unleashing Hidden Powers," p. 115; "Ministry and Minister," MM, 31 (1969), 151; "Time to Change," p. 181.

141 W. Carl Ketcherside, "I Believe In A Pastor System," MM, 8, No. 12 (1947), 6; "Pastoral Flypaper," MM, 36 (1974), 70, 71.

142 W. Carl Ketcherside, "Through the Dust," MM, 29 (1967), 19; "Quenching the Spirit," MM, 29 (1967), 34; "Equipping the Saints," pp. 168, 169.

143 Thomas Campbell, Declaration and Address, pp. 45, 48.

144 For a satirical description of this way of thinking see W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Authority Totem," MM, 31 (1969), 121-126.

145 Eugene Britnell, "The Restoration of Apostolic Worship," in The Restoration Heritage in America: A Biblical Appeal for Today (Marion, IN: Cogdill Publications, 1976), pp. 203-205; John N. Clayton, "God's Finest Design," Firm Foundation, 95 (1978), 387.

146 Ketcherside, "Instrumental Music," p. 8.

147 W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Stumblingblock," MM, 30 (1968), 102; The Power of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today, recorded 18 March 1971, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Speaking in Tongues, recorded February 1971, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); What Constitutes Worship Required Today?.

148 Ketcherside, What Constitutes Worship Required Today?.

149 Ketcherside, What Constitutes Worship Required Today?; Ministry Is for Everyone; What the Faith Is All About, recorded 16 January 1976, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

150 W. Carl Ketcherside, "Introduction to Worship," MM, 28 (1966), 129.

151 Ketcherside, "Worship and Money," p. 177; What Constitutes Worship Required Today?; Every Man Is A Priest, recorded 8 November 1974, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

152 W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Touch of Life," MM, 31 (1969), 33, 37, 38; The Faith in History, recorded 31 October 1972, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Secular and Holy," MM, 37 (1975), 157.

153 Ketcherside, "Introduction to Worship," p. 132; "The Clergy System," pp. 20, 21; The Christian Approach, recorded 5 November 1972, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

154 W. Carl Ketcherside, "Acts of Worship," MM, 29 (1966), 161; What Constitutes Worship Required Today?; "The Ultimate Design," MM, 36 (1974), 105.

Chapter VII

Ketcherside: "Recover The Apostolic Power"

This research has analyzed the invention of W. Carl Ketcherside as he attempted to revitalize the Restoration Movement of the Disciples of Christ. Analysis of his arguments revealed his concept of the exigence he faced: the decay into chaos and division of the formerly dynamic, integrated movement to unite the Christians in all the sects. The previous two chapters examined his invention dealing with the recovery of the apostolic proclamation and purpose. Concerning proclamation, Ketcherside reformulated the religious code of the Disciples to give them a message without the inconsistencies and contradictions of their former code. In dealing with the apostolic purpose, he reworked into a more harmonious system several of their beliefs and practices that had become inconsistent and contradictory. By introducing his resynthesis of their beliefs and practices he hoped to renew among them their original purpose of uniting the Christians in all the sects. A third general area remains for analysis and evaluation, the recovery of the apostolic power. This chapter examines the thinking of Ketcherside as he presented the means, the dynamic by which he believed the Disciples could recover the apostolic proclamation and purpose and thus restore the restoration ideal. The invention of Ketcherside concerning the recovery of the apostolic power focuses on the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of love, the topics of this chapter.

The Gift of the Holy Spirit

The invention of Ketcherside omits completely any suggestion that the power of renewal originates in human endeavor. He mentioned organizational efficiency, doctrinal orthodoxy, educational excellence, financial affluence, and social prestige only in contrast to the divine source of power for renewal. While he valued these as worthy achievements, he exhorted the Disciples to look to the apostolic promise of the Holy Spirit as the power to renew the Restoration Movement.

Unlike the other topics examined in this study, Ketcherside had a limited amount of belief and practice to reformulate concerning the Holy Spirit. Other subjects had dominated the thinking of the Disciples, and they never knew quite what to believe or to do about the Holy Spirit.¹ They had taken a position on the Holy Spirit, but it was more of a negative reaction to revival emotionalism than it was a positive theological statement.² Popular nineteenth century revivalists had taught that the Holy Spirit operated apart from the preaching of the word to convert a person to Christ. Supposedly, dramatic physical and verbal behavior by an individual proved that he had experienced a rebirth of the Spirit. Alexander Campbell found this teaching and its attendant emotionalism repugnant to his intellect and to the enlightenment philosophy he had studied at Glasgow. He emphasized, therefore, that the Spirit and the word were inseparable, both doing the same work.³ Those Disciples especially attracted to rationalism and enamored with the pattern concept of the Bible, interpreted Campbell and the scriptures to mean that the written word and the Holy Spirit were identical. They

reasoned that upon the completion of the Bible and the deaths of the apostles the influence and work of the Holy Spirit came directly and only by studying the Bible.

Ketcherside explained that the Churches of Christ in which his parents reared him had equated the Holy Spirit and the Bible. They gave little thought to the Holy Spirit during his boyhood because, as he wrote, "we shut the Spirit up in a book."⁴ As an adult he concluded that their approach to the Holy Spirit had harmed him. He said that even though the Churches of Christ were unsure about the Holy Spirit, they could not stand seeing anybody else wrong on the subject. They mentioned the Holy Spirit, therefore, only in attacks upon what other religious groups believed concerning the Spirit.⁵

Ketcherside denied the idea that the Holy Spirit and the Bible were identical. He found no evidence to support this idea, and he found several biblical promises about the Holy Spirit that a book could not fulfill.⁶ According to Ketcherside, the belief of the conservative Disciples concerning the Holy Spirit was ridiculous. Their position had the Holy Spirit retiring from active service by writing a book. Ketcherside concluded that the Disciples did not really believe that the Holy Spirit bound himself in a morocco, nylon-stitched, and gold-stamped book, but rather that the Disciples did not believe in the Holy Spirit at all.⁷ To supplant this void in the thinking of the Churches of Christ, and probably to explain the transformation of his life after 1951, he developed a doctrine of the Holy Spirit.⁸ He reaffirmed the apostolic promise of the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit, and he

opined that this would strike at the heart of the legalism that the conservative Disciples had adopted.⁹

Ketcherside asserted what some Disciples had previously stated, that the Holy Spirit inhabited the body of every Christian.¹⁰ The presence of the Holy Spirit provided power to the Christian adequate for any task that God demanded. That power, Ketcherside explained, worked in the life of a believer when by faith he opened his heart to the Holy Spirit.¹¹ In keeping with the tradition of the Disciples, Ketcherside did not mean that the work of the Holy Spirit would produce unusual behavior in a believer. He denied that he had ever experienced anything that resembled a mystical experience. The gift of the Holy Spirit, as he understood it, did not include bizarre experiences.¹² The power of the Holy Spirit indwelling a believer, he emphasized, transformed the carnal nature of the person into the moral and ethical nature of God for the benefit of all humankind.¹³

Ketcherside presented several areas in which the Disciples could recover the power of the Holy Spirit. His invention on this topic explained rather than persuaded. As already mentioned, he had little to refute on this subject. His teaching, based on his experience and his biblical research, identified the following areas of living for recovering the power of the Holy Spirit: (1) The Holy Spirit will pour the love of God into the heart of a believer. (2) The Holy Spirit will fill the believer in order to endure a crisis experience. (3) The Holy Spirit will mortify the base desires of the body. (4) The Holy Spirit will pray for the believer when the believer does not know

how to pray for himself. (5) The Holy Spirit will strengthen the inner person of a believer. (6) The Holy Spirit will create within the believer the divine nature of Christ. (7) The Holy Spirit will incorporate the obedient believer into the body of Christ.¹⁴

Each of the above functions of the Holy Spirit demonstrated divine power upon which every individual could draw. The person must reach out in a childlike faith and a dependent attitude, Ketcherside explained, and appropriate this power. For the Disciples, this meant a repudiation of their organized agencies, their patterns of doctrine and worship, and their intricate arguments they had developed to defend their opinions.

For the Disciples as a corporate people, the recovery of the unifying power of the Holy Spirit received primary attention in the invention of Ketcherside. The Disciples had attempted for more than a century to unite people by conforming them to a pattern of belief and practice. They failed to accomplish their goal and they divided over the pattern. Ketcherside exhorted them to recognize that the Holy Spirit created unity, not human beings.¹⁵ The power to recover the apostolic unity came from the Holy Spirit, and the recovery of the apostolic power came by faith in the promise of God. According to Ketcherside, every person who believed and obeyed the gospel had received the indwelling gift of the Holy Spirit. Recognition of this fact would, in his opinion, unite the Disciples and remove their past divisions.¹⁶

In addition to the individual benefits and the corporate unity that would result from recovering the apostolic power, Ketcherside

included the fellowship of the Spirit. Individually, he had recovered fellowship with all other believers through the power of the Holy Spirit.¹⁷ He believed, therefore, that the fellowship they had lost by debating over their patterns and their sectarian attitudes could be recovered by the Holy Spirit acting within them. He urged the Disciples to seek the fellowship of a shared common life, a life animated by the Holy Spirit.¹⁸

The Gift of Love

The invention of Ketcherside regards as inseparable the power of the Holy Spirit and the power of love. He argued that the Disciples must recover both gifts, the Holy Spirit and love, as the power sources for revitalizing the Restoration Movement. In order to understand his revitalization rhetoric we must, therefore, examine his teaching concerning the power of love.

When Ketcherside spoke of love in a biblical sense he did not refer to an emotion. The love that would empower the Disciples to renew the Movement was an act of will. Love, as he defined it, was the active and beneficent good will which stops at nothing to achieve the good of the beloved object.¹⁹ He believed that all people could practice this quality of love, but not as a result of human effort. The love that he identified as the apostolic power came as a result of the Holy Spirit working in the individual who believed God. This love came as a gift from the Father to His children who asked in faith.²⁰ As Ketcherside explained it, the individual comes to God out of a deep sense of need and throws himself completely upon His mercy. In response, God fills

the person with the Holy Spirit and the Spirit enables the person to love himself and then to love all other people. It was this power that Ketcherside exhorted the Disciples to recover as the means of revitalizing the Restoration Movement.

Analysis of the invention of Ketcherside indicates that he intended to supplant the patternism of the Disciples with the power of love. Whereas the Disciples had constructed patterns of beliefs and practices to unite people and to regulate their behavior, Ketcherside proposed the power of love instead. The problem he saw with the patternism of the Disciples was that it imposed a law from without. He believed that Jesus intended to give each person His love working from within. Patternism had ignored love and had instituted a legal system that worked as a police force to restrain behavior by law. Ketcherside argued for love as a magnetic force drawing people to a common center.²¹ The whole problem of the Restoration Movement he ascribed to lovelessness. In his opinion, the Disciples divided, not because they differed about beliefs and practices, but because they ceased to love each other. He proposed that only the power of love could heal those divisions, prevent future divisions, and restore the restoration ideal to the Movement.²²

The proposal of Ketcherside to recover the apostolic power of love as the solution to the divided condition of the Disciples met vigorous opposition from the conservatives in the Movement. They followed the more legalistic statements of Alexander Campbell, who believed that the Bible took the place of the ascended Jesus, and that it stood second in importance to His sacrifice.²³ The conservative Disciples concluded

that, since the Bible occupied such prominence in the Christian system, agreement upon its teaching was a prerequisite to all the blessings and advantages of the Christian communion. Agreement upon the Bible as the sole rule of faith and practice, they argued, must come first and then love would follow.²⁴ One conservative writer, in opposing the idea that love would solve their problems, accurately phrased the difference between Ketcherside and himself. He argued that their problems came from intellectually conceived points of view regarding the Bible and, therefore, they could "only be resolved intellectually."²⁵

The insistence by the conservatives on agreement before love ignored the fact that another train of thought on this matter existed within the Movement. Campbell himself, while exalting the ends of the Bible above the realm of debate, recognized that the ways and means to attain those ends were clearly debatable. Such matters as methods and programs he placed under the law of expediency, upon which he admitted that no group of human beings could completely agree. Campbell exhorted the Disciples, therefore, to observe love as supreme, not agreement, when they differed over questions of expediency.²⁶ Isaac Errett expressed the same opinion.²⁷ It was this position on love that Ketcherside wanted the conservative Disciples to exchange for their dependence upon patternism.

Ketcherside recognized love as the only power capable of overcoming the sectarian attitudes and divisions that existed among the Disciples. He made the communication of this premise the obsession of his life.²⁸ The power of love, in his opinion, would restore the unity and dynamic

that the Disciples had lost while it would not require them to change a single opinion about any issue.²⁹ He even argued that all divisions between any people, no matter what the issue, could be solved if the opponents would first of all love each other.³⁰ In his invention, love became the "golden key of fellowship," the "secret of the Christian walk," and the "motivating principle for every act of service."³¹ He illustrated his concept of the power of love by comparing it to the rim of a wagon wheel. A wheel has both a common center and a perimeter. Christian fellowship, he explained, also has a common center and a perimeter. The center that draws all believers together is faith in Jesus. Love is the power that keeps believers from spreading apart at the perimeter.³² He exhorted the Disciples to lay aside their party patterns that had never kept them together and to recover the apostolic power of love that would restore their unity.

The invention of Ketcherside exhorted the Disciples to turn from their patternism and their party polemics as the sources of power that would restore the restoration ideal. He supplanted all human achievements with a complete dependence upon the power of two divine promises. The indwelling Holy Spirit and love, given to every believer as divine gifts, could provide the only dynamic for revitalizing the Movement, Ketcherside affirmed. This concept of power, as contrasted with a dependence upon patterns and debating, emphasized human humility and faith, not human intellect and achievement, as the proper approach for recovering the apostolic power.

Notes

¹ Alfred T. DeGroot, Disciples Thought: A History (Ft. Worth, TX: A. T. DeGroot, 1965), p. 13.

² DeGroot, p. 47.

³ Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, 2nd ed. (1839; rpt. Nashville, Gospel Advocate Co., 1974), p. 48.

⁴ W. Carl Ketcherside, "One Spirit," Mission Messenger, 36 (1974), 113; hereafter cited as MM; "Rivers of Living Water," MM, 50 (1968), 148.

⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, Does Every Christian Have the Holy Spirit? recorded 16 October 1974, Disciples of Christ Historical Society, Nashville, TN (cassette); hereafter cited as DCHS, Nashville; Does Every Child of God Have the Holy Spirit?, recorded 18 November 1974, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); The Covenant, recorded 30, 31 March 1977, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

⁶ W. Carl Ketcherside, The Person of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today, recorded 15 March 1971, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Question and Answer Forum, recorded March, 1971, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "One Spirit," p. 114.

⁷ W. Carl Ketcherside, Illumination and Revelation, recorded 2 December 1966, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Spirit and Word," MM, 33 (1971), 39.

⁸ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Common Life," MM, 37 (1975), 17-22.

⁹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Two Great Foes," MM, 26 (1964), 131; The Covenant; Does Every Child of God Have the Holy Spirit?.

¹⁰ Ketcherside, Does Every Child of God Have the Holy Spirit?.

¹¹ W. Carl Ketcherside, The Power of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today, recorded 18 March 1971, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Does Every Christian Have the Holy Spirit?; Does Every Child of God Have the Holy Spirit?.

¹² W. Carl Ketcherside, "Men and Morals," MM, 31 (1969), 115, 116.

¹³ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Church Speaks of Discovering and Unleashing Hidden Powers," North American Christian Convention, Long Beach, CA, 27 June 1963; Does Every Christian Have the Holy Spirit?.

¹⁴ Ketcherside, The Person of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today; Question and Answer Forum, March 1971; The Christian Approach to Charismatic Gifts, recorded 8 November 1972, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Does Every Child of God Have the Holy Spirit?, recorded 6 November 1974, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Spirit and Word," p. 40; Holy Spirit and Party Spirit, recorded 20 March 1963, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Does Every Child of God Have the Holy Spirit?, 18 November 1974; The Spirit of God, recorded May 1969, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); The Finger of God, recorded 21 October 1965, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

¹⁵ W. Carl Ketcherside, "One Body in Christ," MM, 36 (1974), 97; "The Unrecognized Unity," MM, 27 (1965), 60, 61; The Christian Approach to Charismatic Gifts; Question and Answer Forum, March 1971.

¹⁶ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Hands of Folly," MM, 24, No. 6 (1962), 2, 3; The Greater Fellowship, recorded 24 April 1963, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); Holy Spirit and Party Spirit; The Spirit of God.

¹⁷ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Our Editorial Policy," MM, 29 (1967), 46.

¹⁸ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Sectarianism," MM, 24, No. 11 (1962), 11; "Fear and Suspicion," MM, 25 (1963), 26; Areas of Needed Restoration, recorded 20 May 1977, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

¹⁹ W. Carl Ketcherside, Agape: Foundation of Christian Fellowship (Dallas, TX: Bible Book Store Press, 1965); Speaking in Tongues, recorded February 1961, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

²⁰ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Ground of Christian Fellowship," in The Missouri Christian Lectureship (Joplin, MO: College Press, 1961), p. 35; "The Fallen Mantle," TS, DCHS, Nashville; Question and Answer Forum, March 1971.

²¹ W. Carl Ketcherside, Fellowship of the Spirit, recorded 4 July 1964, DCHS, Nashville (cassette).

²² W. Carl Ketcherside, Peacemaker, recorded 4 June 1963, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); The Peace of the Holy Spirit in Our Lives Today, recorded 19 March 1971, DCHS, Nashville (cassette); "Time to Change," MM, 36 (1974), 182.

²³ Alexander Campbell, The Christian System, 2nd ed. (1839; rpt. Nashville: Gospel Advocate Co., 1974), p. 35.

²⁴ Robert Welch, "Campbell Versus Modern Ecumenics," Gospel Guardian, 17 (1965), 113, 114; "Love Will Not Whitewash Error," Editorial, Firm Foundation, 80 (1963), 610; "Love? Yes; Unity? Not Necessarily So," Editorial, Gospel Guardian, 22 (1970), 436.

²⁵ James W. Adams, "How Successful Is Ketchersidean Subversion?," Truth, 17 (1973), 694.

²⁶ Campbell, The Christian System, pp. 74, 75

²⁷ Issac Errett, "Our Position," in Historical Documents Advocating Christian Union, (1904; rpt. Rosemead, CA: Old Paths Book Club, 1955), pp. 322, 323.

²⁸ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Statement of Conviction," MM, 35 (1973), 177.

²⁹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Question Box," MM, 30 (1968), 113, 114.

³⁰ W. Carl Ketcherside, "The Awesome Patience," MM, 34 (1972), 105-108.

³¹ W. Carl Ketcherside, "Making Allowances," MM, 21, No. 6 (1959), 13; "Agape," TS, DCHS, Nashville; Speaking in Tongues.

³² Ketcherside, The Greater Fellowship.

Chapter VIII

Summary

This chapter summarizes the procedures and the findings of this study, a rhetorical examination of the invention of W. Carl Ketcherside, a Disciples of Christ minister. The research proposed to answer the following questions: (1) Is Ketcherside saying anything that differs significantly from the traditional beliefs and practices of the conservative Disciples? (2) What are the functions and consequences, if any, of the invention of Ketcherside among the Disciples? In order to answer these questions this study used a rhetorical and a nonrhetorical critical perspective. Traditional rhetorical criticism facilitated the analysis of each argument as a discrete artifact of persuasion. Using the Toulmin model of an argument, the evidence, claim, and warrant for each argument examined was evaluated. This procedure revealed what Ketcherside was saying in his discourse, and it made possible a comparison between his invention and the beliefs and practices of the Disciples.

Sociological and anthropological research on the development and the nature of religious groups provided the nonrhetorical perspective. From this perspective each argument was analyzed as an artifact of persuasion arising from the dynamics of facts, events, and relationships existing among the Disciples. Viewing the Disciples as a mutable system

of belief and practice permitted the researcher to discover what functions and consequences the invention of Ketcherside was having among them. The research design included the revitalization construct that Anthony Wallace described in his research. This construct suggested that the revitalization of a disintegrating religious system begins when an individual experiences a personal transformation. As a result of this experience the individual reorders the elements of the inadequate religion and communicates the new order to members of the group. By viewing Ketcherside and his invention from this perspective it was possible to discover and evaluate the reasons for and the functions of his discourse to the Disciples.

The application of these critical perspectives required initially an appraisal of the current status of the Disciples and of the place of Ketcherside among them. Chapter Two, therefore, recorded the following history of the Disciples that was germane to this study. In 1809 the Disciples began as a movement to unite the Christians in all the sects by restoring the apostolic church in its worship, discipline, and government. They failed as a unity-restoration movement, and they became the Disciples of Christ, a Protestant denomination of American origin. The Disciples, in turn, divided into three mutually antagonistic groups: the Christian Church (International Convention), the Christian Church (North American Christian Convention), and the Churches of Christ. The following mutually contradictory and inconsistent elements of their religious system fostered their disintegration: (1) They disagreed on doctrinal matters. Some emphasized the unity of believers while others

emphasized the restoration of a biblical pattern; they failed to identify and to agree upon the biblical pattern that they proposed to restore; they had no standard to discriminate consistently between biblical essentials and biblical nonessentials; and they polarized around an exclusivistic or an inclusivistic concept of Christian fellowship.

(2) They disagreed on religious practices. Some prohibited practices on which the Bible remained silent, while other Disciples permitted freedom on matters of silence; the liberal Disciples became social activists and associated with and accommodated to the greater society, while the conservatives practiced separatism; some Disciples accepted into their churches the members of other denominations while others rejected all outsiders who had not converted to their concept of the "restored" biblical pattern; and some Disciples adopted instrumental music in worship, a professional clergy, and extra-congregational agencies to promote their programs, while other Disciples rejected all these as being decadent practices. (3) Disagreement over doctrines and practices led to organizational divisions among the Disciples. The conservative and the moderate Disciples created no formal structure above the local congregation, while the liberal Disciples structured themselves into a denominational organization; the Disciples followed the leadership of the strong-minded men who edited their brotherhood periodicals and who promoted their three-way division; and each group established separate and distinctly different types of annual gatherings to represent their respective doctrines and practices. (4) They developed separate sets of symbols to communicate their doctrinal,

practical, and organizational divisions. The conservative Disciples built inexpensive, unadorned church buildings, while the liberal Disciples built more costly, ornate buildings; each group adopted distinctive titles for their respective groups and group leaders; and each group employed "we-they" language, labels, slogans, and journalistic phrases that widened their three-way rift.

Chapter Three reported the following information that described the position of Ketcherside among the Disciples. In his youth he joined the Churches of Christ that followed the radically conservative leadership of Daniel Sommer, editor of The American Christian Review. These churches opposed instrumental music, Bible colleges, a professional paid clergy, and extra-congregational agencies. Ketcherside rose to prominence among these churches because he was an able speaker and polemicist for the group. In 1951, while preaching in Ireland, Ketcherside realized the contradiction of his religious life—preaching unity while practicing division. Under the stress of this contradiction he experienced a traumatic struggle within himself. This struggle led to a dramatic change in his attitudes and consequently in his beliefs and practices. He changed his goal from promoting a party to revitalizing the spirit and the ideal of restoration among the Disciples. He spent seven years examining his previous beliefs and practices, and in 1958 he published "Thoughts on Fellowship," a resynthesis of the doctrines and practices of Christian fellowship. Since 1958 he has become a speaker and a writer of increasing influence and controversy among the Disciples. His sermons and essays have produced continuous

criticism and reordering of the religious system of the Disciples in which he has called for a renewal through the recovery of the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power.

After appraising the status of the Disciples of Christ and the relationship of Ketcherside to them, the research materials were examined using the critical perspectives proposed for this study. The primary sources included articles Ketcherside wrote and published in Mission Messenger, his articles published in various other journals, books he wrote, published debates in which he participated, audio recordings of sermons he delivered from 1963 through 1977, audio recordings of interviews with Ketcherside, and personal letters written by Ketcherside. The secondary material examined in this study included books and articles in which the authors report and comment on the life and discourse of Ketcherside and on the history of the Disciples of Christ, unpublished theses that examined selected teachings of Ketcherside, personal letters that reveal the writers' opinions of Ketcherside, and audio recordings of interviews with people who have known Ketcherside during most of his lifetime.

This study, by examining the invention of Ketcherside in its historical context and through the proposed critical perspectives, yielded the following conclusions. Chapter Four reported how Ketcherside perceived the general needs of the conservative Disciples in their current stage of development. As he grew in historical knowledge of the unity-restoration movement that the Disciples had begun, his invention shifted from that of debating about patterns and methods to that of

clarifying and evaluating general concepts, like the self-image of the Disciples. He concluded that the Disciples needed the spirit of restoration renewed rather than their patterns of belief and practice debated. This rhetorical strategy permitted him increased intellectual freedom and flexibility for reordering the inconsistencies and contradictions in the religious system of the Disciples. Ketcherside argued that the primary problem facing the Disciples was their internal division. He claimed that the Disciples had committed the fatal error of all previous religious movements, they had lost their original purpose. The problem facing the Disciples, therefore, as discovered in the invention of Ketcherside, was that they had lost their unity drive, had isolated themselves from other religious groups, and had warred among themselves over minor issues. They had destroyed the integrity of their unity plea by dividing themselves and thereby they created for themselves the need to renew the spirit and the ideal of restoration.

The research revealed that Ketcherside identified seven interrelated causes for the divided condition of the Disciples. He argued that they had become complacent and defensive, had abandoned their unity purpose, had confused their movement with the universal church, had developed the posture and the machinery of a religious party, had confused the gospel of Christ and the apostles' doctrine, and had protected their doctrinal orthodoxy by dividing from each other over disagreements.

Ketcherside believed that the Disciples could resolve their differences and heal their divisions. He suggested several solutions for their divisiveness. For himself as an individual, he resolved to

correct his own errors, to promote restoration and unity in his writing and speaking, to avoid those attitudes and practices that had created their past divisiveness, to restore the lines of communication among the divided Disciples, and to cross all party barriers to achieve unity.

His invention defined several areas where all of the Disciples could make changes that would resolve their divisions. He argued that their thinking needed a change by making the search for truth primary, by rejecting their anti-intellectual bias, by engaging in honest research, by reforming their religious vocabulary, and by thinking in terms of the spirit of restoration. He called for a changed attitude toward brotherhood, making it so important that division over private opinion would become unthinkable. His invention identified several concepts held by the Disciples that needed reordering. Their divisiveness would diminish, he argued, if they reformed their concepts of the Bible, the gospel, the church, the fellowship, and the ministry. In the area of policy changes, Ketcherside argued that they should substitute discussion for debate, should remain with their original group to share any new truths that they learned, and should practice congregational autonomy.

An attitude of optimism pervaded his invention as he analyzed the general needs of the Disciples in their divided condition. Despite the disintegration he perceived among the Disciples, he predicted a change, and he described the signs of its emergence. He claimed that a third "great awakening" would attune the Disciples to the needs of the current secularistic age, and that this was happening by recovering the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power.

Chapter Five reported on the invention of Ketcherside that resynthesized the following doctrines: the Old and New Testaments, the nature and the use of the Bible, the gospel and the apostles' doctrine, and the Christian creed. Concerning the Old and New Testaments, Ketcherside argued that misconceptions in this area had divided the Disciples and all of Christendom. He defined "the covenant" as the method by which God and man come into mutual agreement and fellowship. The Old Testament, he claimed, included only the "Ten Commandments" of Moses and the remaining scriptures were the history, songbook, and sacred literature of the covenant people. He described the Old Testament as a simple, brief message, understandable to all with minimal instruction and reasoning. He argued, therefore, that the New Testament was not something that replaced all of the Hebrew Bible, but that it was whatever replaced the "Ten Commandments." He concluded that the person of Jesus, not the twenty-seven books of the Christian Bible had replaced the "Ten Commandments." According to Ketcherside, a trusting dependence in the person of Jesus constituted the New Testament. This concept significantly differs from the doctrine held by the Disciples. Since Thomas Campbell wrote the Declaration and Address the Disciples have thought of the entire Christian Bible as the New Testament, a perfect constitution for church worship, discipline, and government. This concept had divided the Disciples due to their differing interpretations and applications of what they thought was the New Testament. Ketcherside removed all this by concluding that the New Testament was a simple, brief message about Jesus, understandable to all with minimal instruction and reasoning.

The invention of Ketcherside concerning the nature and the use of the Bible also differs from the traditional beliefs of the Disciples. They claimed that the Bible was a perfect constitution revealed by God, and was therefore easily understood by all honest people. This belief encouraged them to suspect dishonesty in and to separate from anyone who differed with their "restored biblical pattern." Ketcherside denied that all could understand the Bible alike or that any reason existed why they should. He argued against the belief that the Bible was a pattern to which people had to conform. His invention showed that the Bible never had claimed this for itself, and that those who believed in patternism had divided rather than had united people. He claimed that the Bible resembled a collection of love letters from the Father, instructing the covenant people how to live in the human predicament as Jesus would. Viewed in this perspective, he urged that the Disciples change their use of the Bible. He taught them that they should use the Bible to instruct and to mature the covenant people, that they should stop crystallizing patterns from the Bible, and that they should stop expecting people to accept those patterns as the basis of the covenant relationship.

The invention of Ketcherside also clarified the difference between the gospel of Christ that saves a person and the doctrine of the apostles that nourishes a person. Failing to make this distinction, some Disciples had equated the entire Christian Bible with the gospel. This belief caused them to force upon others their interpretations of the Bible as if those interpretations were the gospel. Division resulted from this

concept of the gospel. Ketcherside argued, as did Alexander Campbell, that the gospel consisted of seven biblical facts about Jesus: his life, death, burial, resurrection, ascension, coronation, and glorification. Ketcherside described the rest of the Bible as the doctrine of the apostles, a course of instruction on how to live within the divine-human covenant, but not the gospel that all had to believe and obey.

Finally, the invention of Ketcherside reordered the inconsistent belief of the Disciples about the Christian creed. At times the Disciples had proclaimed Christ as the creed, and at other times they had proclaimed the Bible as the creed. Ketcherside concluded that the conservative Disciples had not proclaimed Christ or the Bible as their creed. They had proclaimed "Church of Christism," their views, explanations, and traditions. The creed, according to Ketcherside, consisted of one proposition: Jesus is the Messiah. A person was the subject of the Christian creed, not a book over which people could disagree and divide.

In each of these doctrinal areas, Ketcherside described the beliefs held by the Disciples that had disintegrated their movement. Then he replaced those beliefs with a resynthesis of each that would produce a more harmonious and consistent religious system.

Chapter Six reported on the invention of Ketcherside that discussed the recovery of the apostolic purpose. Ketcherside reordered the purposes of the Disciples in the areas of the church, fellowship, unity, ministry, and worship. Originally, the Disciples proposed to unite believers in one church, the spiritual family of God on earth. They

shifted purposes, however, from uniting believers to converting believers to their respective parties. They equated their movement with the church of God, developed an institutional mentality and structures, and required conformity to their approved pattern. The invention of Ketcherside rejected the institutional concept of the church. He argued that believing individuals rather than institutionally regimented groups constituted the church. His invention urged the Disciples to stop promoting their party and to restore the apostolic purpose, uniting people into the one church through faith in Jesus as the Messiah.

In order to recover the apostolic purpose Ketcherside also reordered the concept of fellowship held by the conservative Disciples. They had based fellowship upon conformity to the pattern of belief and practice held by their respective parties. The Disciples, therefore, included or excluded people from fellowship when they accepted or rejected the pattern of church worship, discipline, and government held by each respective party. This practice created continual fragmenting among the Disciples whenever they disagreed over their religious interpretations and opinions.

The invention of Ketcherside promoted a nonsectarian, nonhumanistic concept of fellowship. He argued that nothing people built, created, or agreed upon could produce fellowship. The fellowship, he claimed, was the creation of God, who called people through the gospel and who gave them a common life when they responded affirmatively to that call. His invention reversed the practice of the Disciples concerning fellowship. Whereas they had required agreement as a means to fellowship, Ketcherside

advocated the practice of fellowship as a means to arrive at agreement. This approach to fellowship removed the obsessive quest for agreement that had divided the Disciples, and it permitted them to recover their unity purpose. In summary, his invention proposed that God alone creates the fellowship by calling people into it through the gospel, and that people enter the fellowship by faith in Jesus, irrespective of human agreement, endorsement, or doctrinal knowledge.

The invention of Ketcherside also reasserted the primacy of maintaining the unity of believers in Christ. He considered the ability to destroy factionalism and to promote unity the overriding requirement for all religious beliefs and practices. His analysis and argumentation struck at the inconsistent practices of the Disciples. They proclaimed unity, but they practiced division, and they mutually blamed each other for the divisions. He described their practice of uniting people in Jesus, the living Word, and then dividing them over the Bible, the written word. He urged the Disciples to consider their personal beliefs and practices as secondary in importance and to base brotherhood and ecumenicity on submission to Christ only. By restoring unity to its former primal position among the Disciples they would revitalize their movement and would restore the apostolic purpose.

In his invention Ketcherside also called for the practice of the priesthood of all believers as a means of recovering the apostolic purpose. The Disciples had developed a professional clergy system that Ketcherside claimed some leaders had used to work against the unity of believers. They had exercised arrogant, intolerant persecution tactics,

had rendered the congregations subservient, and had substituted the one-man pastor system for the mutual ministry system. In order to recover the apostolic purpose, Ketcherside urged the Disciples to think of the church as a family rather than as an organization, to broaden their concept of ministry, and to consider all baptized believers as ordained ministers. These changes, he concluded, required a practicing eldership to direct each local congregation, and required church meetings designed for training people to minister rather than designed for performing rituals.

The invention of Ketcherside also gave new direction to the Disciples in their worship practices. Thomas Campbell had assumed that the Christian Bible contained a pattern of worship for the church to follow. The Disciples, therefore, attempted to distill that assumed pattern from biblical commands, examples, and inferences. This produced divergent patterns and practices over which the Disciples debated and divided. Ketcherside rejected the assumption that the Bible contained a fixed pattern of worship. He argued for an evolutionary concept of worship in which the spiritual development of the people determined the nature of the worship that God required. The pattern approach to worship, he claimed, belonged to the age of spiritual immaturity. Mature worship required no specific days, acts, or places prescribed by biblical commands, examples, or inferences. He described mature worship as the grateful response of the human heart to the grace of God. This response, he argued, was worship in "spirit and truth," and it invalidated the practice of performing and enforcing on people specific acts, at specified

times, in special buildings, and in a prescribed manner. This concept reordered their divisive practices concerning the assumed worship pattern, and it promoted the recovery of the apostolic purpose—oneness in Christ.

Chapter Seven reported the findings of this study concerning the means of recovering the apostolic proclamation and purpose. Analysis of the invention of Ketcherside discovered that he argued for the recovery of two sources of apostolic power, the gift of the Holy Spirit and the gift of love. He claimed that revitalization could never happen through organizational efficiency, doctrinal orthodoxy, educational excellence, financial affluence, or social prestige. His invention pointed to the dynamics of the Holy Spirit as a power source for renewal. The Disciples had tended to ignore the biblical teaching concerning the Holy Spirit, or they had equated the Holy Spirit with the Bible itself. Ketcherside argued that the Holy Spirit was a divine personality who transformed carnal people into moral and ethical people by divine power. He claimed that the Disciples had attempted for more than a century to unify believers, but that they had failed. He urged them to repudiate their dependence on organizations, patterns of doctrine and worship, and debating as the means to recover apostolic unity.

He argued that the gift of love was inseparable from the gift of the Holy Spirit. Both provided the essential power to restore the unity of all believers. Love, as he described it, came as a divine gift to believers in Jesus, and not from their human effort. Whereas the Disciples had imposed patterns of church worship, discipline, and government in order to unite people and to regulate their behavior,

Ketcherside argued that only love working from within could accomplish these goals. Ketcherside reasoned that legal codes, acting as an external police force could never unite people, but love working as an internal magnetic force could. The whole problem of the Disciples, he contended, was their lovelessness. He, therefore, communicated love with an obsession. The power of love, in his opinion, would revitalize the Disciples and restore to them their lost unity.

The research reported and summarized here answers the major questions of this study. Is Ketcherside saying anything significantly different from the traditional beliefs and practices of the Disciples? The research showed that Ketcherside significantly departed from the tradition of the Disciples in his invention on the nature of the New Testament and the nature of the Christian Bible. In contrast to Thomas Campbell, who believed that the New Testament was a document that provided a perfect constitution for church worship, discipline, and government, Ketcherside believes that the New Testament is the person of Jesus. The divine-human covenant, he argued, results from trusting in Jesus, not from an accurate understanding and conformity to a collection of writings. This constitutes his most innovative thinking and his most significant departure from the beliefs of the Disciples. On other topics like the differences between the gospel and doctrine, the Christian creed, the primacy of unity, baptism, fellowship, ministry, and worship, he contributed to the thinking of the Disciples, but he said nothing new. For the most part, his invention restated, clarified, and applied to the contemporary situation what had been spoken and written by the founders of the Disciples of Christ.

This study asked a second major question; what are the functions and consequences, if any, of the invention of Ketcherside among the Disciples? The research revealed that the invention of Ketcherside performs at least three functions. First, his invention describes, clarifies, and evaluates the disintegrated status of the unity-restoration movement of the Disciples, and it does so in constant contrast to their founding principles and practices. Second, his invention identifies the contradictory and inconsistent beliefs and practices of the Disciples, and it reorders them into a more harmonious religious system. Third, in order to establish a new steady state in place of their current chaotic state, the invention of Ketcherside communicates to the Disciples the more harmonious beliefs and practices.

The effectiveness of Ketcherside as a communicator results partially from these functions of his invention. Rather than promote a narrow party program and dogma, he sensed the general disarray of the Disciples and their corresponding dissatisfaction. He designed his invention, therefore, to speak to their needs and expectations as members of a disintegrating unity movement. By reordering the old religious system he produced a message of harmony and consistency that found a ready reception among representatives of all groups of Disciples.

This study suggested that several consequences could result from the invention of Ketcherside. First, the Disciples could supplant their inadequate religious system with an entirely new system. The research indicates that this will not happen. While the invention of Ketcherside resynthesizes the traditional beliefs and practices of the Disciples, it

also reasserts, clarifies, and applies to the contemporary situation the founding principles of the Disciples. As noted earlier, his invention makes few radical departures from those principles. Second, a new faction of Disciples could form around the personality and the ideas of Ketcherside. The evidence indicates that this will not happen. He has discouraged this possibility in his speaking and writing, and he has rejected all opportunities to gain institutional status and power among the Disciples. To prevent this possible consequence he has discontinued the publication of Mission Messenger, he has remained with the Churches of Christ, and he has urged others to stay with their religious groups. Third, the Disciples may modify their beliefs and practices toward a more consistent and harmonious system without creating another division. This possibility appears the most likely in light of this research. Except for the extremes at both ends of the spectrum of Disciples, representatives of their factions cross party lines and establish lines of communication. Today, they discuss their mutual problems in unity forums more frequently than they debate their differences in sectarian encounters.

The invention of Ketcherside has several potential contributions for society in general. First, if the Disciples cease investing their resources into promoting their party interests they can minister to the ills of humankind. Second, the invention of Ketcherside speaks to every division existing within Christendom. The scandal of schism has turned off the light of those people whose Master said, "ye are the light of the world." If all the believers of Jesus would heed the invention of

Ketcherside, to recover the apostolic proclamation, purpose, and power, then they could more effectively minister to each other, and they could devote themselves to ameliorating human suffering rather than to promoting denominational and sectarian organizations. Third, the invention of Ketcherside has value for our world, fragmented by intolerant dogmatisms, arrogant self-interests, and treacherous despots. Amid the voices elevating above human welfare economic philosophies, political systems, and ethnic biases, the voice of peacemaking needs to be heard. The invention of Ketcherside speaks to the problem of disintegration within the human community. His is the invention of peacemaking, an art always worthy of study and scarce in supply.

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